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JULY 1998

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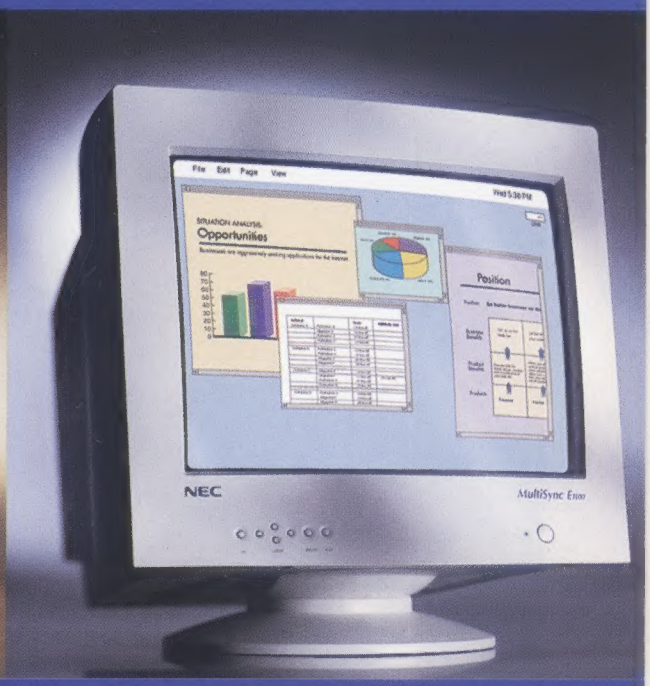

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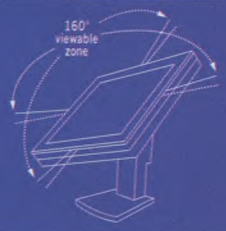

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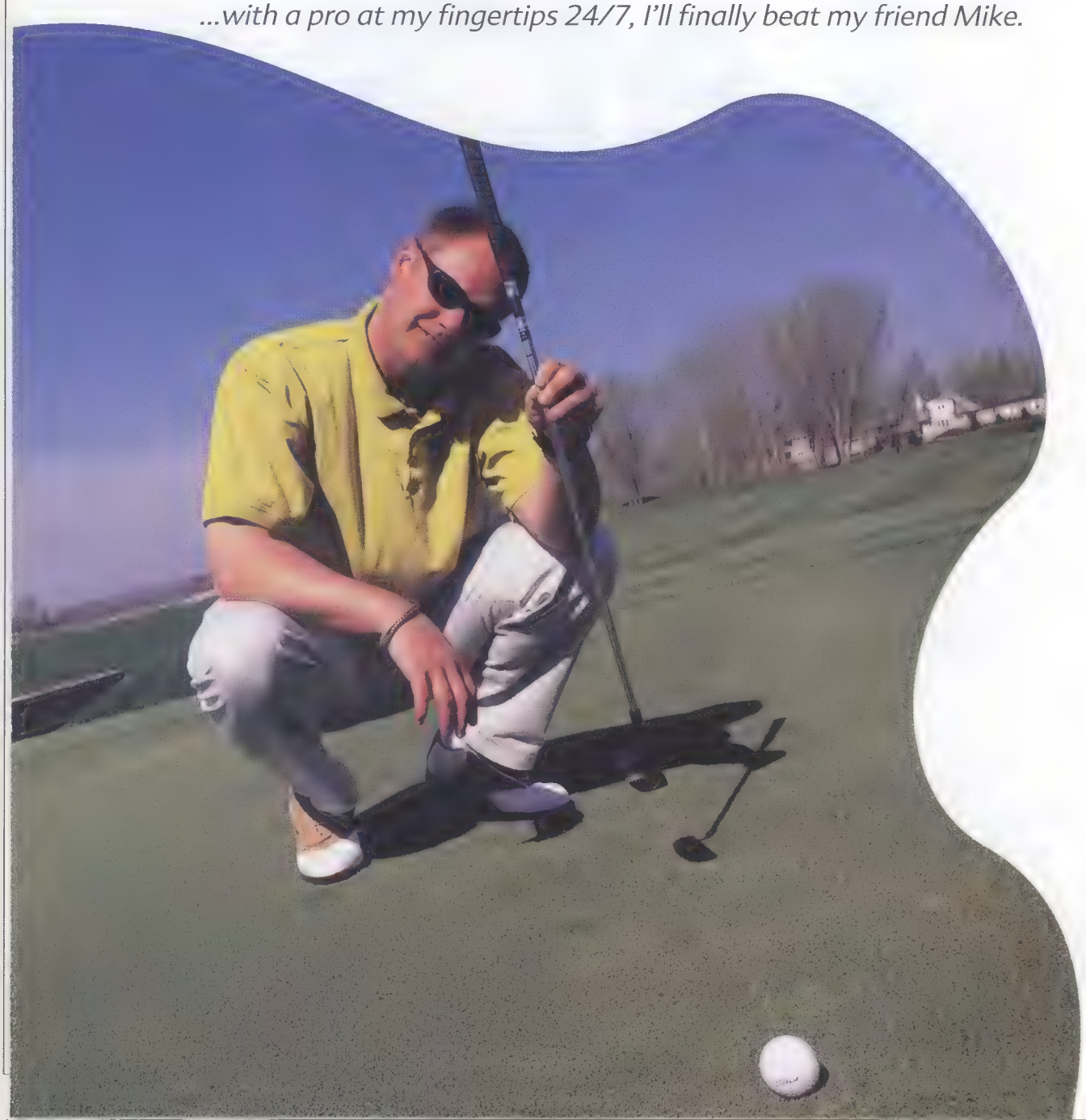

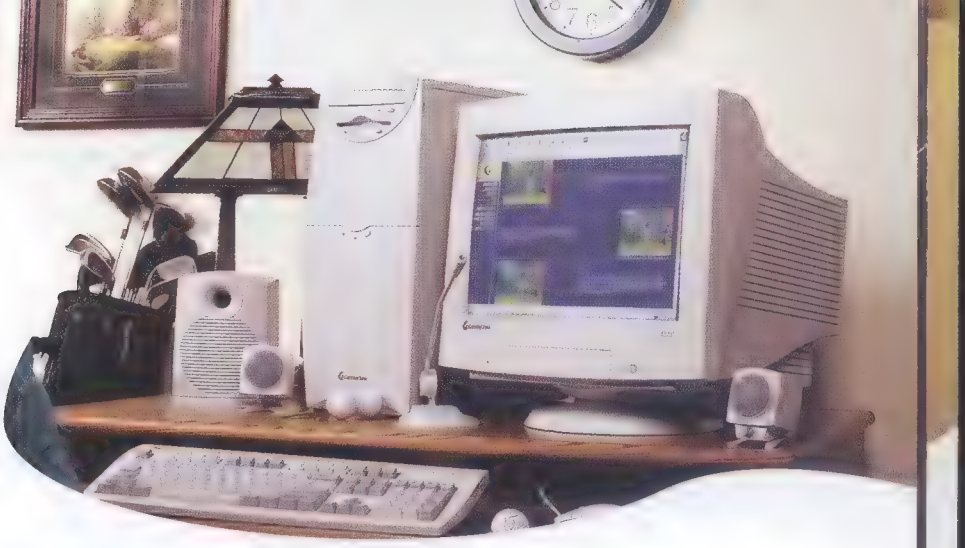

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A few of your options

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sound	• Boston Acoustics® MicroMedia™ Speakers	• harman/kardon® Dolby® ProLogic Speakers	• harman/kardon Dolby ProLogic Speakers
processor (speed)	• Intel® Pentium® II Processor 266MHz	• Intel Pentium II Processor 333MHz	• Intel Pentium II Processor 400MHz
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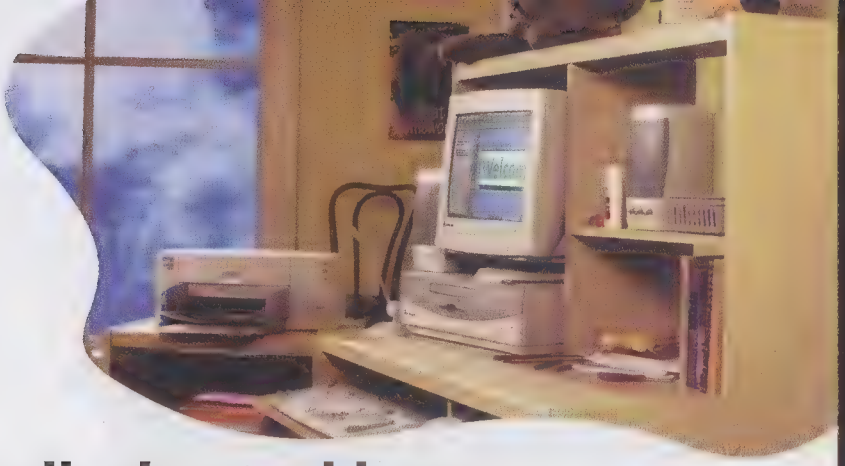

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PUBLISHER Greg Mason

SALES MANAGEMENT

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER, WEST COAST Lucy Wohltman, (415) 547-8073

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER, EAST COAST Michael C. Bird, (781) 393-3520

INSIDE SALES MANAGER Kimberly Black, (415) 547-8621

ADVERTISING COORDINATOR Becky Barnhill, (415) 547-8012

SALES ASSISTANTS Loreen Bernardini, Jennifer Crandell, Oryan Ferguson, Nikki Gunn, Kimberley Klevstad, Sandy Marciniak, Kathy Pavlak, Anne Sadowsky

ADVERTISING SALES OFFICES

NEW ENGLAND

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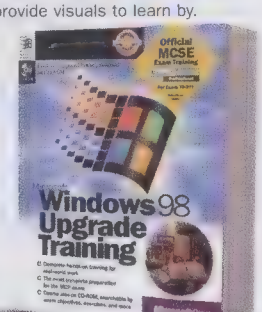

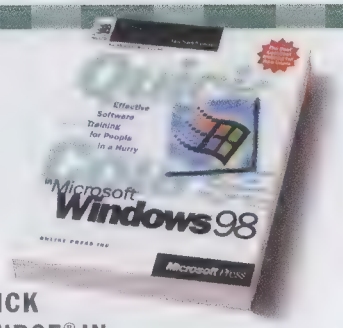

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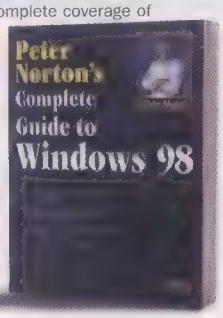

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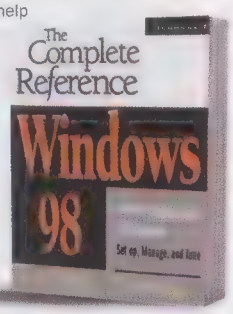

RUNNING MICROSOFT® WINDOWS® 98

by Craig Stinson

This in-depth reference will be your right-hand man from the day you open the package. The book is packed with information about new features and the CD contains searchable versions of the book that'll have you up and "running" Windows 98 quickly. (Microsoft Press)

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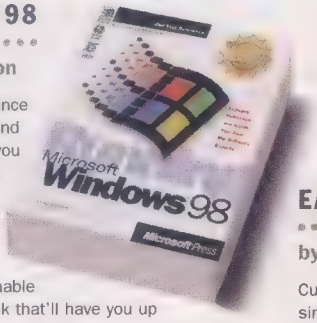

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by Shelley O'Hara

Cut to the chase with this handy tutorial that simplifies the tough tasks and makes the simple tasks second nature. Each page is packed with tips and techniques to speed you through Windows 98. (Que)

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by Brian Livingston and Davis Straub

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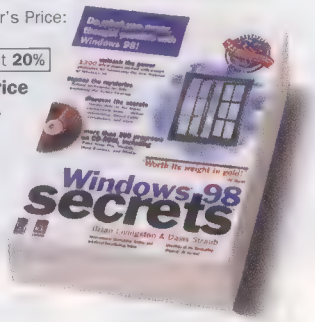

"Give us the tools, and we will finish the job."

-Winston Churchill

MICROSOFT WINDOWS® 98 AT A GLANCE

by Jerry Joyce and Marianne Moon

Finally, an inexpensive fast-track to the right answers. Most every task you'll ever perform in Windows 98 is covered here, and the information is easy to find, concise, and on target. (Microsoft Press)

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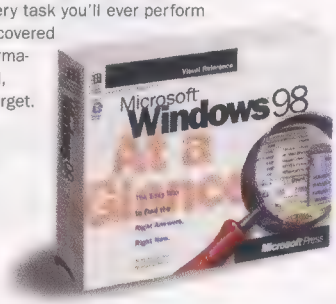

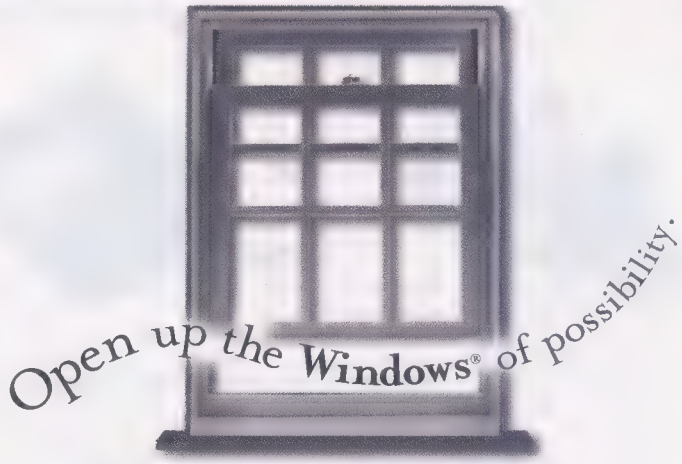

MICROSOFT® WINDOWS® 98 STEP BY STEP

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This book is filled with real-world examples, all laid out in easy-to-follow procedures that takes you one step at a time through the lessons you need to utilize Windows 98. (Microsoft Press)

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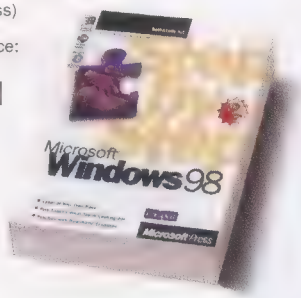

WINDOWS® 98 BLACK BOOK

by Nathan Wallace

The hands-on approach of the "Black Book" digs into the particulars of Windows 98, and is perfect for the professional person who just wants to implement, deploy, and enjoy. (Coriolis)

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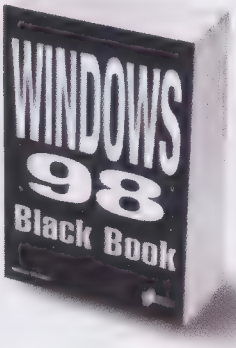

TEACH YOURSELF WINDOWS® 98 IN 21 DAYS

by Michael Hart and Paul Cassel

The perfect book for intermediates. In a few short weeks, this latest book in the *Teach Yourself* series will teach you all you need to know about Windows 98, from DCOM to Active Desktop to new hardware—it's all right here. (Sams)

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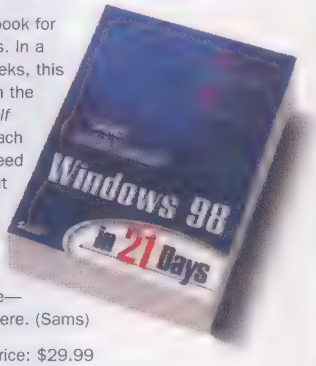

SPECIAL EDITION USING WINDOWS® 98

by Ed Bott and Ron Person

A brand-new edition of the industry's top-selling Windows reference/tutorial covers the breadth of Windows 98 know-how. Internet Explorer 4.0, Dynamic HTML—everything under the Windows 98 sun—is included here. (Que)

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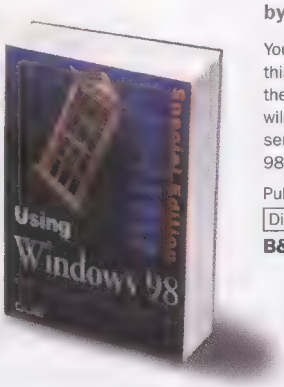

WINDOWS® 98 FOR DUMMIES®

by Andy Rathbone

You don't have to be a dummy to use this guide. Andy Rathbone delivers the skinny on the new OS in the wildly popular *...for Dummies®* series, sure to make Windows 98 users of us all. (IDG)

Publisher's Price: $19.99
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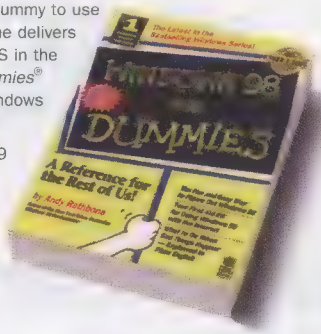

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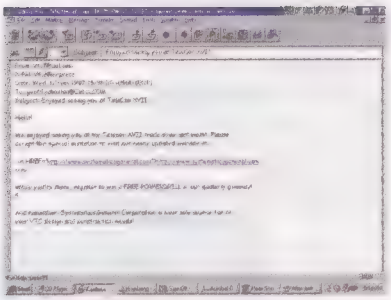

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BIG PAYBACK

ROI Rules

Your review of 19-inch monitors was extremely helpful ("Live Large," May, page 215). As the technology leader of a manufacturing plant, I'm constantly bombarded with requests for new technologies. We don't have the resources to validate the return on investment of these technologies and often make purchases on gut feeling. The ROI analysis you did on bigger monitors gives us the justification to purchase them in the future. Keep it up.

LAIRD MOTT
VIA THE INTERNET

Crazy Old Wizard

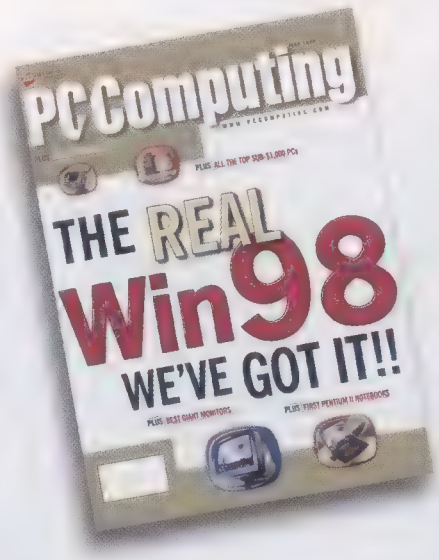
First of all, *PC Computing* is the most comprehensive computing magazine on the market, and Ed Bott's "Top 10 Reasons to Upgrade to Windows 98 (and a Few Reasons You Shouldn't)" is a fine example of this (May, page 162). But concerning the section "Smart Setup, Easy Upgrades," I'd have to say that the Update Wizard is *not* a reason to buy Windows 98. If the Update Wizard is anything like the Internet Explorer Update Wizard, it'll be slow, inconsistent, and a general pain in the neck.

DAVE MELENDEZ
VIA THE INTERNET

THE IE4 UPDATE WIZARD is indeed a mess, but the Windows 98 Update Wizard worked well during our beta testing. Will it really perform as promised over the long run? Only time (and paying users) will tell. **EB**

Dangerous Drivers

In regard to May's "Windows on Wheels" (Pulse, page 36), I'm extremely concerned about the future of driving. Most people already drive dangerously. Give them a cellular phone, and they become death on wheels. But adding a complete PC with e-mail, the Internet, DVD, and games to the dashboard is



absolutely ludicrous. I can see it now—Dad gets a ticket for driving under the influence of e-mail. Or worse, some malicious hacker pops my hood as I'm cruising down the freeway.

WALT MOORHOUSE
VIA THE INTERNET

Sour Grapes

I'm glad to see someone step up and accurately paint Microsoft's adversaries as self-serving (Somerson, "Software Baron," May, page 79). Scott McNealy feels threatened because too many people are buying Windows NT–based workstations and servers rather than the overpriced, poorly supported Sun systems. I think his case is about envy, not supposed anticompetitive behavior. If Netscape wants to compete, then it should fulfill the vaporware desktop replacement promise it made over a year ago. That's what prompted Microsoft to build Internet Explorer into the Windows shell in the first place.

DAVID WOLF
VIA THE INTERNET

Society of the Spectacle

Unfortunately, Paul Somerson is right about Bill Gates's image ("Software Baron," May). We live in a world where perception is everything and substance is nothing. What Somerson really outlined is the condition of society.

BRUCE ERWIN
VIA THE INTERNET

Bibliophile Bill

Mr. Gates recently gave our little town's library a generous grant, and I would venture that he has done so for more than Carnegie's 2,811 libraries (Somerson, "Software Baron," May). Thanks, Bill!

ARMAND WINTER
VIA THE INTERNET

Going 78th, Going 79th . . .

My experiences with e-commerce have been, by and large, reliable and exciting. But I recently participated in an online auction that confounded my perceptions (Taylor & Jerome, "Going Once, Going Twice . . ." May, page 81). I had the winning bid at the specified closing time and logged off, only to be informed the next day that I had been outbid. Apparently, the bidding continued for 30 minutes past the specified time. With traditional auctions, an item remains on the block until the bidding stops, but this is fraud. Caveat Emptor.

JIM ALEXANDER
VIA THE INTERNET

Making the Grade

I teach Windows 95 at a local college, and found your April issue to be extraordinary. *PC Computing* always has the most practical and useful articles, but the tricks for safely hacking the Registry and for crash-proofing the system are new to me ("Undocumented PC Secrets," page 132). The April issue is now part of my permanent reference collection.

James M. Sugden
via the Internet

Point of Fact

I could say lots about John C. Dvorak's rant—but the only thing worth zeroing in on is his assumption that *Wired* magazine is losing money ("Wired or Tired?" May, page 83). The magazine has just posted its fifth straight quarter of profitability. Just the facts.

Jane Metcalfe
Cofounder and President
Wired Magazine
via the Internet

Disgruntled Digerati

John C. Dvorak's May column is very interesting and well done ("Wired or Tired?"). But I question one point. As Dvorak knows, the Media Lab depends on sponsors and press. So where did he get this from: "There looms Nick Negroponte, the 'information should be free' guy who makes reporters sign onerous nondisclosures merely to visit his Media Lab." I am not talking about the "information should be free" part, although I have never aligned myself with that. It's the nondisclosures I'm concerned about. I've never asked a reporter to sign one, and I doubt anybody else at the Media Lab has. What an odd thought. Dvorak surely did not invent this, so it must come from somewhere.

Nicholas Negroponte
Founding Director of the
MIT Media Lab
via the Internet

I WAS SHOWN a copy of a nondisclosure-type document by a writer who was going to do a piece on the Media Lab a few years ago. The document included the right of the Lab to see the piece before it was submitted. **JCD**

Take It Outside

I can't believe I pay money for this. John C. Dvorak's "Wired or Tired?" has nothing to do with getting work done or using a computer. John, please reserve your personal attacks for your Web page. I don't understand the rift between you and *Wired* magazine, and I don't want to. I don't want to open my *PC Computing* magazine, wade through the ads, and find this kind of tirade.

Tom Jordan
via the Internet

Old News

"Yeah! Woo-hoo! It's about time someone stood up to Microsoft!" Sound familiar? There were many letters like that in the May issue of *PC Computing*. Everyone is glad that someone, namely Paul Somerson, finally said that Windows 95

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is shoddy ("Guilty!" March, page 87). Well, he's not the first. People have been talking about it in print, around the office, and everywhere else for years.

VINCE PASCARELLA
VIA THE INTERNET

Magitronic Mix-up

My job, in part, is to provide advice on buying computers. I used *PC Computing*'s Top $1,000 Systems list as my latest source ("Can a $1,000 PC Really Take On a 333MHz Screamer?" May, page 194). The No. 1 pick, a Magitronic Technology Pentium II, costs much more than the quoted $999. And to add insult to injury, the company only sells to resellers. My advice is only as credible as my sources. Should I change sources?

DENNIS M. LAVIN
VIA THE INTERNET

AT PRESS TIME, Magitronic verified the $999 price and configuration we published. Since then, the company has not been able to meet demand.

ROI Explained

Overall, I appreciate *PC Computing*'s thoughtful content. In my opinion, however, features regarding the return on investment (ROI) of certain upgrades can be unclear and misleading. Can you explain the methodology you used in the ROI studies? Stories such as "Upgrades That Pay" leave me wondering how in the world your editors arrived at the spectacular figures mentioned in the article (April, page 194).

ANDREW VADEN
VIA THE INTERNET

PC COMPUTING'S ROI analyses are based on industry-standard methodology and formulas. First we measure the performance increase for typical business tasks in our Usability Labs. Then we plug that number into an ROI formula, which takes into account the cost of the upgrade and the hourly wage of the worker. We use industry averages to compute ROI, but you can find out your exact payback by entering your own data into the published formula. For more details about usability testing and ROI, check out www.pccomputing.com/usability.

For the Record

The shareware price for Adarus Business Plan is $60 (Web Kahuna, May, page 284).

If you upgraded from Windows 3.1 to Windows 95, the two files (W95UNDO.DAT and W95UNDO.INI) that may be hidden on your C:\ drive hog more than 20MB ("Undocumented PC Secrets: The Ultimate Fix-It Guide," April, page 148).

HOW HAVE NEW TECHNOLOGIES BAILED OUT YOUR SMALL BUSINESS? Send your comments and feedback about this and other subjects to Mail, *PC Computing*, 50 Beale St., 13th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105; contact us via e-mail at PCCmail@zd.com; or post a public message on our Web site at www.pccomputing.com. Letters are subject to editing for length and clarity.

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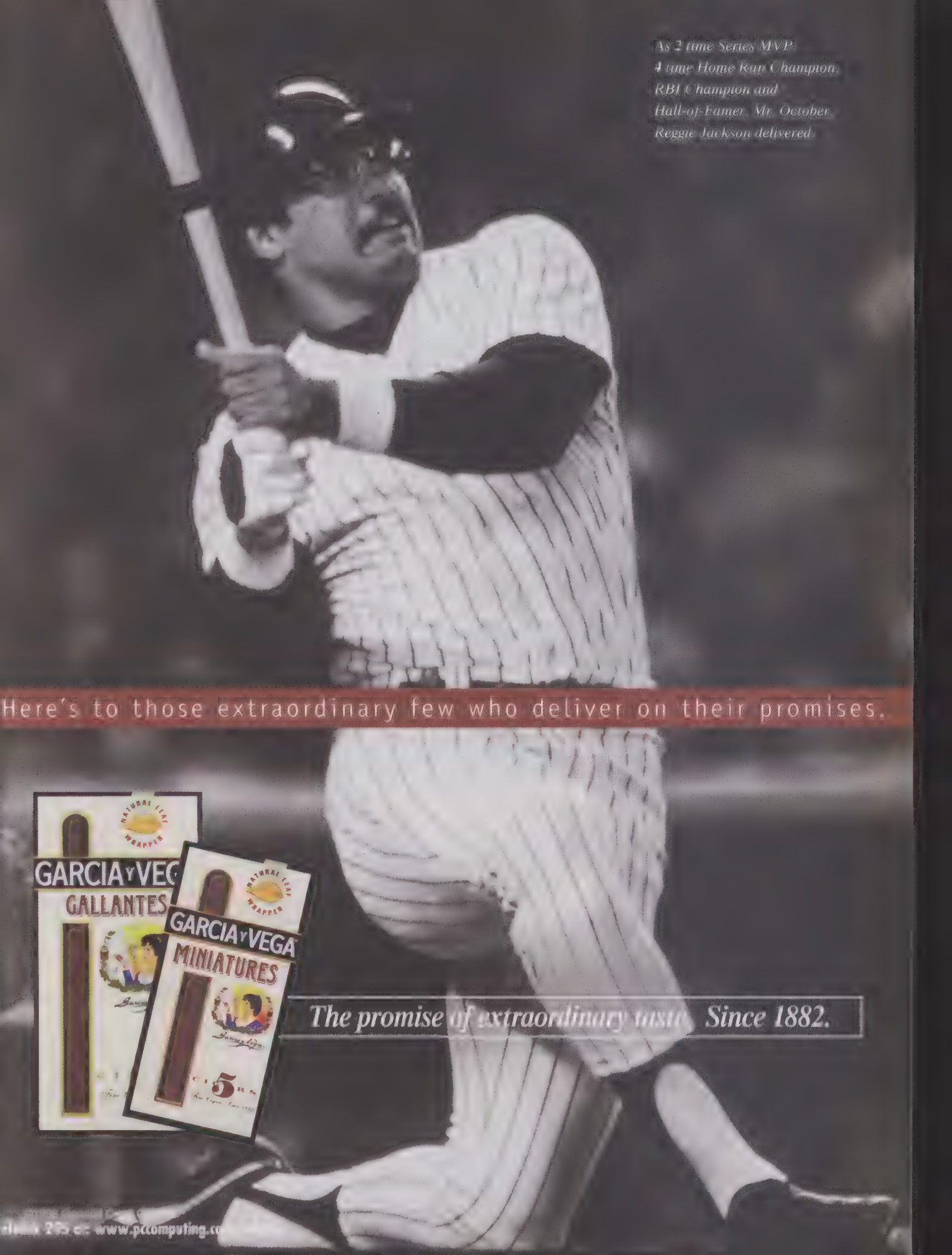
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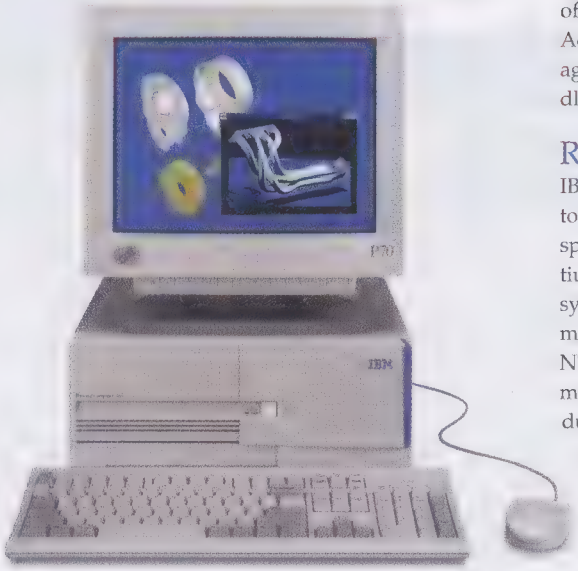

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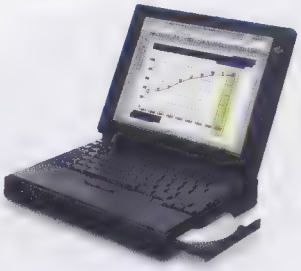

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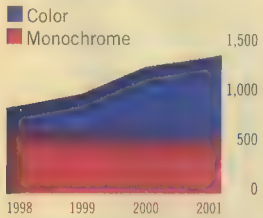
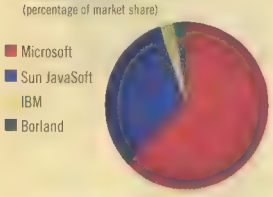


SOURCE: ZD INFOBEADS

All-in-One Office Color multifunction devices (MFDs) will rise in popularity through 2001. Monochrome sales are expected to peak in 1998, then decline steadily.

Web Tools
(percentage of market share)



SOURCE: COMPUTER INTELLIGENCE

Tool Time Microsoft leads the Web development tool market, with Sun's JavaSoft taking the second-place spot. IBM and Borland bring up the rear.

ISP Extras
(percentage of providers)

SOURCE: ZD MARKET INTELLIGENCE

Full Service More than half of ISPs in the United States now offer a broad range of business services, including support for credit card payments and security.

WINDOWS ALTERNATIVES

Operating Systems à la Carte

"Where do you want to go today?" For software behemoth Microsoft, the inference to this open-ended ad jingle is clear—you can go anywhere you want, as long as you use some flavor of Windows to get there. Well, some folks would rather have you "Think different," and we're not just talking about Apple Computer.

Several alternative operating systems and freeware products have emerged as options to the status quo. And interestingly enough, many of these technologies run on Intel processors. It's too early to bet your business on them, but you'd better keep an eye on them—Microsoft certainly is, and with good reason.

Special Order A smorgasbord of operating systems, including BeOS, Linux, Apache, and JavaOS for Business, offers low-cost alternatives to Windows.

Originally targeted as an alternative to the Macintosh, BeOS (www.be.com) is focused on high-end multimedia and audiovisual editing. For $100, you can run Release 3 of BeOS in tandem with Windows on your dual-boot, Intel Pentium II machine. What sort of apps run on BeOS? BeatWare offers a half-dozen products, from drawing software to e-mail; and Gobe Software, staffed with former Claris folks, is working on Gobe Productive, a Microsoft Office–like business suite.

Another up-and-coming OS option is Linux (www.linux.com), a 7-year-old freeware product. Today an estimated 8 million people use Linux, and a few commercial versions have cropped up. For $50, Red Hat Software offers Linux 5.0, a commercial version of the OS that serves as a Web server, e-mail server, or file server, and it runs on Intel hardware. As for apps, Macmillan Digital Publishing's $90 Applixware Office Suite for Linux matches most of what you'll find in Microsoft Office, plus it offers a macro language and e-mail client. Competitively, Linux

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A full-featured notebook for $1,499? You're not dreaming. Acer's Extensa 367D Series gives you a 200MHz Pentium with MMX. Contact Acer at (800) 733-2237.
Enter 669 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

MILLENNIUM FEVER
If you have the year 2000 jitters, check out Microsoft's updated Year 2000 Web site at www.microsoft.com/year2000. It outlines the Y2K compliance of Microsoft products.

ORIGINAL IMAGE © BETTMANN ARCHIVE ILLUSTRATION BY PETER ALAN GOULD

holds promise as Netscape moves toward combining Linux into its browser to create a competitor to Microsoft Windows NT.

Pop-quiz time: Name the most prevalent Web server in use today. If you guessed something from Microsoft or Netscape, you're wrong. It's Apache (www.apache.org), a freeware Web server that, according to Netcraft, a British consulting firm, controls over 50 percent of the Web server market. Compared with Windows NT Server 4.0, starting at $809, and Netscape's Enterprise Server, starting at $1,295, the Apache freebie is a bargain worth investigating.

Another project in the works involves—you guessed it—the poster child of Windows alternatives: Java. Sun Microsystems and IBM are in joint development working on a new JavaOS for Business (www.sun.com/javaos) that runs on Intel hardware in addition to network computers. But don't expect products to ship until early next year.

For some pundits, alternatives like BeOS, Linux, Apache, and JavaOS for Business are just the beginning of the next big shift in personal computing. To be sure, we've only scratched the surface—there are a raft of freeware and low-cost alternatives out there, from Web browsers like Opera Software Opera 3.2 to programming languages like Perl. You might not want to bet your business on them just yet, but they're worth watching. **RS**

Contributors to Pulse:
LESLIE AYERS, KYLA CARLSON, RICH SCHWERIN, *and* CHRISTINE GRECH WENDIN.
Edited by JULIE POLITO.

Presenting . . . 3-D!

Give those flat PowerPoint presentations a little depth with **Viewpoint's LiveArt** 3-D graphics effects. This is no ordinary clip art—each LiveArt graphic is a **fully editable 3-D object.** You can rotate, size, and even render the objects in **35 art styles,** from pencil sketch to pointillist. And drop LiveArt into **any Office 97 document—**there are even **animations** you can use to spice up your Web site. **JP**

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CD-R Drives

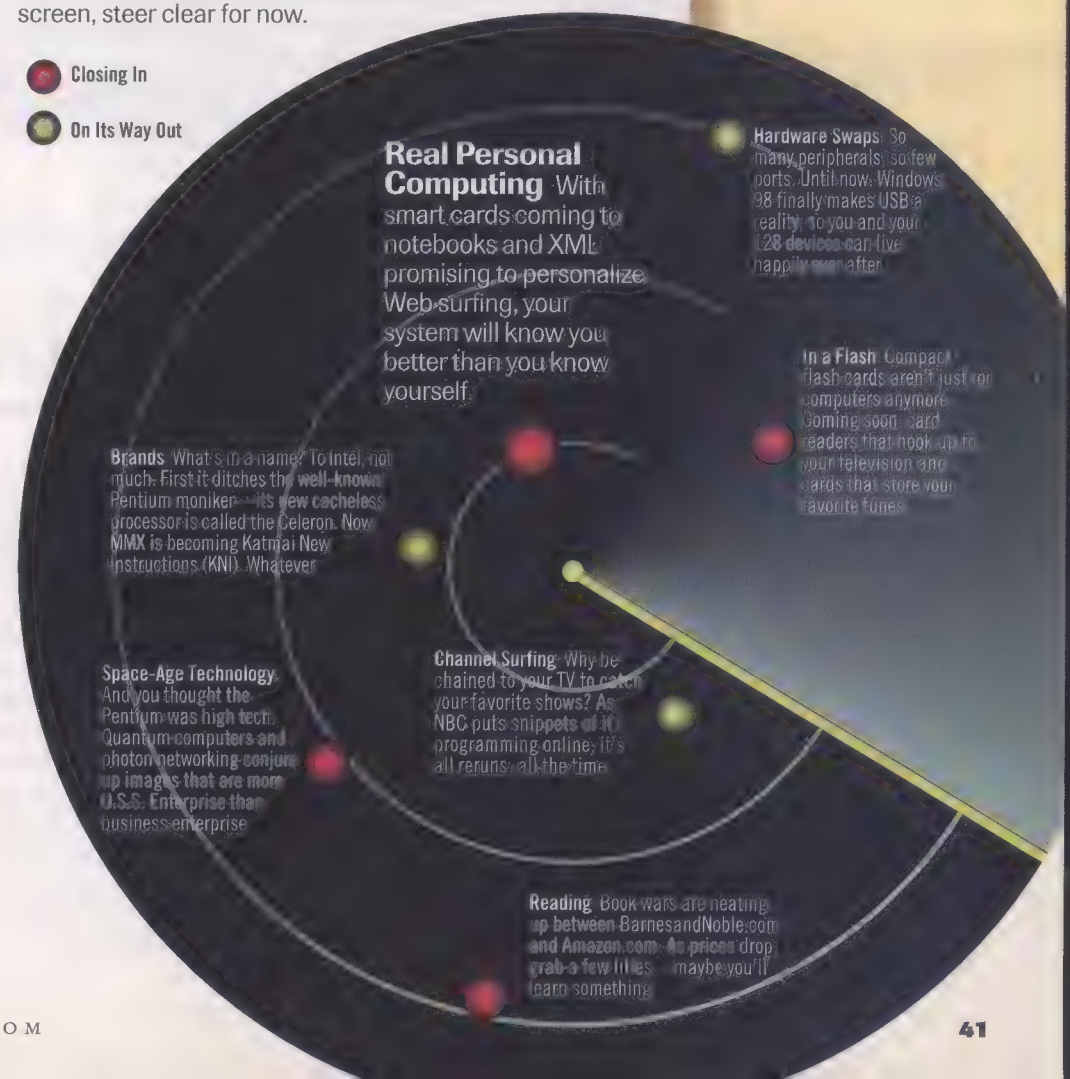
If you need to stash those files or back up your system, try a CD-R drive. Recordable CDs are spacious and cross-platform. Here are the cheapest CD-R drives we could find as of May 1.

Product	Price
Sony Spressa 928E *PC Mall* *(800) 863-3282*	$294
Hi-Val 2X/8X Internal Recordable Drive *CompUSA* *(800) 294-4727*	$300
Smart and Friendly CD-R 1002/Pro *Insight* *(800) 467-4448*	$354
TEAC 4X/12X Recorder *Egghead Computer* *(800) 344-4323*	$397
Plextor PX-R24CSI CD-R *Computer Discount Warehouse* *(800) 850-4239*	$398

Enter InfoLink numbers at www.pccomputing.com/infolink: PC Mall, *674*; CompUSA, *676*; Insight, *673*; Egghead Computer, *672*; Computer Discount Warehouse, *675*.

RADAR PERSONAL TOUCH, BRAND DISLOYALTY

What's on the scope? If a blip is near or moving toward the middle of the radar screen, check it out. If it's moving off the screen, steer clear for now.



You've Got (Deadly) Mail

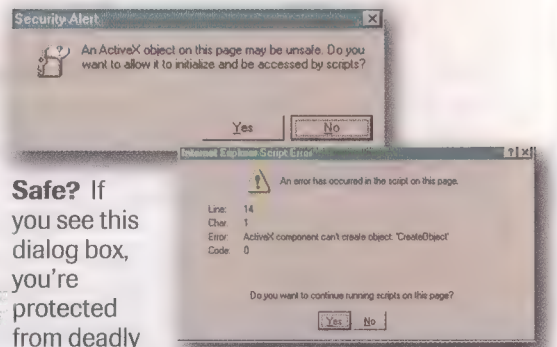
How many messages warning about the Good Times virus have you deleted? This ubiquitous Internet hoax warns of a killer e-mail message that destroys entire hard drives when you open it. The Good Times virus is an urban legend, but unfortunately, the concept is no longer science fiction. Thanks to a widely available Microsoft utility called the Windows Scripting Host (WSH), it's now possible for an e-mail message or a Web page to destroy data or attack networks, even if the recipient does nothing more than open the message.

Developers who have mastered VBScript or JavaScript will be drawn to the WSH like moths to a flame. Both languages allow Web designers to create active HTML pages that respond to mouse events and even pop up new browser windows. Installing the WSH lets you run those scripts from the command line or from a Windows shortcut.

The WSH gives system administrators and advanced users a powerful new tool to automate repetitive tasks; Microsoft's sample scripts include routines that add and delete network users and map network drives with a single click. Unfortunately, VBScript can also be a powerful weapon in the hands of vandals and hackers.

Problems surfaced last December, when Microsoft released version 3.1 of its VBScript engine. Unlike previous releases, this incarnation allows VBScript to manipulate files and directories on the host machine. Because Outlook 98 and Outlook Express interpret VBScript and HTML, even a novice programmer can add commands to an e-mail message—deleting files and folders on the target machine, for example, or creating a new batch file with instructions to run the next time the unsuspecting user reboots.

If you've installed version 3.1 of WSH on any Windows NT or 95 machine, you're at risk. Netscape users are safe from this attack, because Navigator and Netscape Mail use only JavaScript and don't respond to VBScript. IE4 users will see the cryptic dialog box shown above, but IE 3.02 will run killer scripts without any warning. Want to immunize yourself? Follow the three-step process outlined at left. **ED BOTT**



Safe? If you see this dialog box, you're protected from deadly VBScript commands.

Or Sorry? Click on No if you see this warning, then check your security settings.

NT TOOLS

PROTECT YOURSELF
Here's how to protect yourself from potentially deadly scripts.

STEP 1: CHECK THE VBSCRIPT VERSION
Search your system for a file called VBSCRIPT.DLL. Inspect its properties—if the version is 3.1a and the file data is 12/30/97 or later, proceed to the next step.

STEP 2: TIGHTEN IE SECURITY
On systems running IE4, adjust a crucial security setting. Open the browser windows, choose View, Internet Options, and click on the Security tab. Select the Custom option and click on the Settings button. Find the option labeled Initialize and Script ActiveX Controls Not Marked As Safe and change its setting from Prompt to Disable. Repeat this process for Outlook 98 and Outlook Express. Choose Tools, Options to find the security zone settings.

STEP 3: WHEN IN DOUBT, DISABLE SCRIPTING
If you use IE 3.02 and are unwilling or unable to upgrade to IE4, or if you want to disable this feature completely, disable the Windows Scripting Host. Find the file named SCRRUN.DLL and delete it. Web-based scripts will still work within a browser window, but they won't be able to access local files and folders.

BRIEFS NT NEWS AND TRENDS

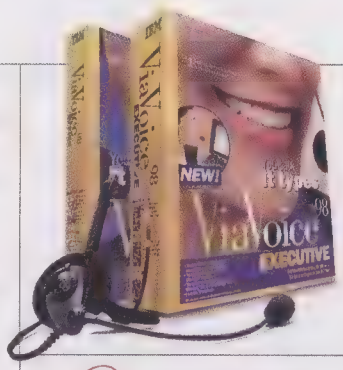
SP4 Previews NT5 Features
What will undoubtedly be the final service pack for NT4 is now in beta testing and should be ready for a midsummer release. Service Pack 4 consolidates nearly a year's worth of post-SP3 hotfixes. There are also some surprises in this release, including a security configuration manager that was originally slated to debut in NT5.

Developer's Release Of NT5 Beta
Attendees at the Windows Hardware Engineering Conference in Orlando last March received a bonus: an interim, developer-only release of NT 5.0, Workstation Edition. This release is reportedly far more stable than the first official beta, which was handed out last fall. Don't expect to see beta 2 until early July, and even that long-delayed milestone may still be missing a key feature or two.

NT5 to Allow Cloning
NT5 will include a new Image Preparation utility, or SysClone, for mass NT installations. Use the software to prepare an image of the OS, then enter a unique computer name and username on the last reboot for each PC. You'll still need disk-duplicating tools like Drive Image to complete the job.

Introducing ViaVoice 98. Unlike other speech recognition software, it can easily comprehend your commands. Period.

Talk about user friendly. New ViaVoice™ 98 from IBM is the first speech recognition software that happily responds to thousands of commands that come naturally to you.* So, for instance, whether you say "*spell check*," or "*check the spelling*," it knows to respond, instead of spelling out the words. Almost as if it understands the meaning of the words, not just the sound. Then, say something like "*save*," "*send*," or "*create a 3 by 4 table*," and consider it done. New ViaVoice 98 with Natural Language Commands. Starting at just $49,† you might say it even understands the word "*affordable*," too. Look for ViaVoice 98 at your favorite software retailer. For more information, visit **www.ibm.com/viavoice** or call **1 800 IBM-2255.**



e business tools

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Single-handedly, it brought the competition to its knees and the critics to their feet.

NEC Direction Series

***Windows Magazine* Hardware of the Year Award Winner**

You don't earn high praise in this industry without high performance. And the NEC Direction Series SPB400 delivers performance and then some. Its 400MHz Pentium II processor boasts a 20% speed gain over the previous 333MHz. Setting new benchmarks in multimedia and 3-D graphics performance. It also sports a 100MHz system memory bus (the first available), for even faster applications, graphics, and video performance. What's more, it's backed by comprehensive service and support like a 3-year UltraCare limited warranty with 1-year on-site service, and a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week technical support line. When it comes to performance and value, the critics have made their choice. Isn't it time you made yours?

"Screaming benchmarks across-the-board."
boot, May 1998 (boot Kick-Ass Product)

"Sizzling performance...Stellar dollar value...4 stars."
PC Computing, May 1998

"NEC's Direction...flat out screams...an excellent choice for small businesses and enthusiasts."
Windows Magazine, April 1998

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Upgrades:
- ➤ U.S. Robotics x2 56Kbps* Winmodem, add $69
- ➤ Creative Labs AWE 64D PCI Wavetable Audio Card, add $99

$1999
Lease From: $74/mo. Code #D5131

Direction SPE266

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- 3D Stereo with 32-Voice Wavetable Audio
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- ➤ Iomega® 100MB Internal Zip® Drive with One Cartridge, add $99
- ➤ Hewlett-Packard DeskJet 694C Printer, add $239

$1599
Lease From: $59/mo. Code #D5132

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to 8.4GB UltraDMA HD $140

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A-List

Editors' top picks in 100 hardware, software, and Internet categories. **Edited by Wendy Taylor and Kyla K. Carlson**

DESKTOP SYSTEMS

Envy of the Office Even the most jaded power users won't shrug at 400MHz BX PCs and their 25 percent performance kick over 333MHz PCs.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
State-of-the-Art PC Dell Dimension XPS R400	What are you waiting for? PCs don't get any better—or faster—than this.	$2,939, 400MHz Pentium II, 64MB RAM, 14.4GB hard drive, 56Kbps modem. (800) 388-8542. See June, 1998, page 54.
High-Performance PC Gateway G6-333	One of the best deals going and one of the best ways to step up to Windows 98. It's fast too.	$2,507, 333MHz Pentium II, 64MB RAM, 14GB hard drive. (800) 846-2000. See May 1998, page 198.
Desktop Workhorse NEC Computer Systems Direction SP E300	A great deal for neck-snapping performance—at a price you can afford.	$2,016, 300MHz Pentium, 64MB RAM, 6.4GB hard drive. (888) 863-2669. See Feb. 1998, page 188.
Low-Cost Desktop PC CompUSA PC American A233	It's no mirage: Get a loaded 233MHz Pentium II for under a grand.	$999, 233MHz Pentium II, 32MB RAM, 32X CD-ROM drive, 56Kbps fax modem. (800) 226-6772. See May 1998, page 204.
SOHO System Compaq Presario 4860	Work hard, play hard. Compaq's Presario 4860 lets you do both. Splurge on the FX500 multimedia monitor.	$2,648, 333MHz Pentium II, 64MB RAM, DVD, AGP graphics. (800) 345-1518. Stay tuned.
Pricewise Direct System Tagram Thunderbolt	You're out of excuses. The Thunderbolt is one of the fastest 300MHz Pentium IIs we've tested at a rock-bottom price.	$2,595, 300MHz Pentium II, 64MB RAM, 6.4GB hard drive. (800) 824-7267. See Feb. 1998, page 191.

SERVERS

Speed Trick The first BX chip sets won't arrive in servers until this fall. Load up on RAM and no one on the network will notice.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
High-Performance Web Server Compaq ProLiant 850R 6/200H	Everything you need to serve up an NT-based Web site—in under an hour.	$4,821, 200MHz Pentium Pro, 128MB RAM, 4.3GB SCSI hard drive. (800) 888-5858. See Mar. 1998, page 104.
Small Workgroup Server Micron Electronics NetFrame LV2000	Jump-start your network. Micron's dual-processor Pentium Pro server runs full steam ahead.	$7,299, 233MHz MMX Pentium II, 256MB ECC RAM. (888) 634-8799. See Jan. 1998, page 155.
Large Workgroup Server Compaq ProLiant 6000	A network powerhouse that's easy to manage and grows with your company. For smaller loads, get HP's NetServer LX Pro.	$24,766, four 200MHz Pentium Pro CPUs, 512MB RAM, two 4.3GB SCSI drives. (800) 345-1518. See Apr. 1998, page 88.

PORTABLE SYSTEMS

Hold It Color handheld PCs that run Windows CE 2.0 weigh less than your cell phone and do more. But at nearly $1,000 why not get a real notebook?

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
State-of-the-Art Portable IBM ThinkPad 770ED	The civilized way to travel: a 14.1-inch display, surround-sound audio, DVD, and a 33.6Kbps modem included.	$5,799, 266MHz MMX Pentium II, 64MB SDRAM, 8.1GB hard drive. (800) 426-2968. See Jan. 1998, page 156.
Desktop Replacement IBM ThinkPad 600	The most convenient way to take 266MHz Pentium II power on the road. Even with a 13-inch screen, it's still under 6 pounds.	$4,599, 266MHz MMX Pentium II, 32MB RAM, 4GB hard drive. (800) 426-2968. See May 1998, page 86.
Traveling Multimedia Portable Dell Latitude CP M233ST	Takes a licking and keeps on ticking. Dell's portable is a torture-test survivor four years running.	$2,699, 233MHz Pentium, 32MB RAM, 3.2GB hard drive. (800) 388-8542. See Apr. 1998, page 172.

*ESTIMATED STREET PRICE.

 continued from page 49

PORTABLE SYSTEMS continued

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Lightweight Traveling Companion IBM ThinkPad 560E	Everything you need and only what you need to travel: a 12.1 inch display and top-drawer usability.	$4,399, 166MHz MMX Pentium, 16MB EDO RAM, 2.1GB hard drive. (800) 426-2968. See Jan. 1998, page 156.
Handheld Portable 3Com Palm III	So it doesn't do color and the handwriting recognition is a little odd—it's still the most usable handheld PC you'll find.	$399, 2MB RAM, backlit display, 5.7 ounces. (800) 881-7256. See June 1998, page 61.

PRINTERS

Do-It-All Office Assistant Canon's MultiPass L6000 is the first laser-based printer/fax/scanner/copier that doesn't force you to make sacrifices.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Low-Cost Desktop Laser Printer NEC Technologies SuperScript 860	A full-featured 600-dpi desktop laser printer for under $400? Why not put one on every desk?	$349, 8 ppm, 600 dpi. (800) 632-4636. See Jan. 1998, page 163.
High-Speed Desktop Laser Printer NEC Technologies SuperScript 1260	Cut the office wait around the printer queue and boost productivity in the bargain. Offices should have at least two.	$699, 12 ppm, 600 dpi, network option. (800) 632-4636. Stay tuned.
High-Speed Network Laser Printer Hewlett-Packard LaserJet 5Si Mopier	It prints, sorts, and staples at speeds close to your $20,000 copy machine. It's more fun to use too.	$9,143 list price, 24 ppm, 3,100-page capacity, 420MB disk drive. (800) 752-0900. See Dec. 1996, page 106.
Multifunction Device Canon MultiPass L6000	Get great-looking laser output. Get 6-ppm print speeds. Get a scanner, copier, and fax in one. Get it all for less than $600.	$599, 600 dpi, 6-ppm laser engine. (800) 652-2666. See June 1998, page 64.
Desktop Color Printer Epson Stylus Color 800	Who says high-quality color has to cost a fortune? Epson's color ink jet delivers photo-quality prints for just pennies.	$299, 1,440-by-720-dpi color and black, 7-ppm color, 8-ppm black. (800) 463-7766. See Jan. 1998, page 162.
Low-Cost Network Color Printer Hewlett-Packard DeskJet 1600CM	The least expensive way to give everyone on the network ink-jet color output. It's fast too.	$1,999, ink jet, 4-ppm color, 9-ppm black. (800) 752-0900. See Jan. 1998, page 162.
High-Speed Network Color Printer Lexmark Optra SC 1275n	Breaks all the rules about color laser printers: It's fast, it's high-res—and it doesn't cost a fortune.	$3,499, 1,200 dpi, 3-ppm color, 12-ppm black, printer management software. (800) 539-6275. See June 1998, page 218.
Personal Photo Printer Sony DPP-M55 Digital Color Photo Printer	Photos too hot for Fotomat? Skip the trip to the mall and print your own 5-by-7 photos in seconds on Sony's miniprinter.	$499, dye sublimation, 144-dpi resolution, infrared port. (800) 326-9551. Stay tuned.

STORAGE

Hold Everything SyQuest's SparQ gives you a gig on the run. Iomega's soon-to-be-released Clik holds 40MB on a disk the size of a dinner mint.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Hard Drive IBM Deskstar 14GXP	A pack rat's dream: Big enough to hold all your files for years, fast enough to find it all in seconds.	$659, 14.4GB Ultra ATA-4, 9.5ms average seek time, 5 cents per megabyte. (800) 772-2227. See this issue, page 175.
Removable Storage SyQuest SparQ 1.0GB	Cheaper than a hard drive and almost as fast. There's no better way to get a gig to go.	$199, $39 for 1GB disk, EIDE, 12ms seek time. (800) 245-2278. See this issue, page 187.
CD-ROM Drive Panasonic 12X Big 5	The race to faster CD speeds is malarkey. Old-school 12X is all you need for today's CDs. With the 12X, you can cut the wait.	$279, EIDE interface, 12X changer, holds five discs. (800) 742-8086. See Jan. 1998, page 186.

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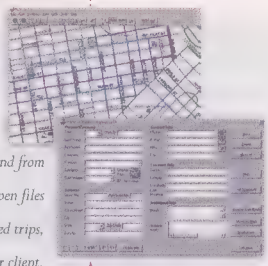
SkyMap transforms your notebook PC into a GPS-guided navigation and map system. It includes a compact 12-channel GPS antenna that plugs into your notebook's PC card slot, a hand-held Remote Commander and 2 CD-ROM disks loaded with detailed maps of all 50 states, 700,000 searchable business listings, major airport layouts, plus an integrated contact management and landmark Address Book.

(Notebook PC not included.)

SkyMap pinpoints your position on the map display and tracks your progress toward your destination. Voice Alerts and multiple waypoints help keep you on track. SkyMap Pro integrates a contact management and landmark Address Book that enables you to import data from applications like Act! or Maximizer. And from the Address Book, you can attach and open files including spreadsheets, memos, pre-recorded trips, or a picture of your client.*



The Remote Commander lets you operate SkyMap functions without touching your mouse or keyboard.

Do not use this product in any way that interferes with safe vehicle operation. Always secure system components.

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**The GPS tracking system is generally accurate within 100 meters, however, various factors may affect the tracking system and further impede its ability to accurately track location. Map data contained in this product may contain errors and omissions. Specifications may change without notice. Business information provided by American Business Information, Inc., Omaha, Nebraska.*

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STORAGE continued

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
CD-Recordable Drive Ricoh MediaMaster	An affordable way to burn your own CDs, share multimegabyte files, and launch your garage band into stardom.	$599 list price for internal SCSI drive, 6X read, 2X write. (800) 225-1899. Stay tuned.
Network Storage Seagate Technology Barracuda 18	Buy a pair and your network may never run out of storage again. Buy one for your own system and you'll never look back.	$1,450, 18GB, 100MBps peak transfer rate. (800) 732-4283. See Mar. 1998, page 176.

PERIPHERALS

Greed Is Good Torn between a scanner and a digital camera? Why not get both? At today's prices you can—and still have money left for a color printer.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Personal Document Scanner Visioneer PaperPort OneTouch	A button-activated control panel and software make this scanner easier to use than a copier.	$249 list price, 600 by 1,200 dpi, 36 bit. (800) 787-7007. Stay tuned.
Graphics Scanner Epson Expression 636 Pro	Graphics experts have nothing on you, thanks to the Expression and its tools. They'll be drooling over *your* scans.	$1,399, 36-bit, 600 by 1,200 dpi, 36-bit color. (800) 463-7766. See Jan. 1998, page 167.
Digital Camera Kodak Digital Science DC210	This little camera offers more than just a pretty picture. There are so many features you'll wonder where to store your images.	$899, 1,152-by-864 resolution, video out, 2X zoom, CompactFlash storage. (800) 235-6325. See Feb. 1998, page 106.
Sound Card Creative Labs Sound Blaster AWE64 Gold	Makes games so real you'll duck when bullets sing by your head. Oh yeah, it's also great for business multimedia.	$149, 64-voice. (800) 998-5227. See Jan. 1998, page 186.
Speakers Altec Lansing ADA310 PowerCube USB Digital Audio Speaker System	Shut the door to your office, pull the blinds, fire up your PC, and crank out the tunes with this three-piece USB speaker system.	$299, 24-watt subwoofer with AC-3 decoder, 3-inch satellite speakers. (800) 258-3288. See Apr. 1998, page 219.
Uninterruptible Power Supply American Power Conversion Back-UPS Pro 650	Zap! Don't let a power spike take your data out with it.	$265, 650-VA UPS, four battery-protected outlets. (800) 877-4080. See Apr. 1998, page 220.
Input Device Logitech MouseMan+	Just try to use another mouse after you've scrolled with this notched wheel. We dare you.	$60. MouseWare software for customizing your mouse. (800) 732-3039. Stay tuned.

VIDEO HARDWARE

You Know You Want One Yes, they're pricey. But flat panels also give off zero radiation, take up less desk space, and consume less power than CRTs.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
High-Resolution 21-Inch Monitor Sony Multiscan GDM-500PS	Spoil yourself. You can afford to with Sony's ultrasharp Trinitron display.	$1,499, 21-inch, 1,600 by 1,200 resolution at 85Hz. (800) 352-7669. See this issue, page 96.
High-Resolution 17-Inch Monitor Sony Multiscan GDM-200PS	Priced a bit higher than the competition, but you're worth it, right?	$799, 1,600 by 1,200 maximum resolution at 70Hz. (800) 352-7669. Stay tuned.
Flat-Panel Display NEC Technologies MultiSync LCD1510	There are bigger LCDs out there, but the image on this 15-incher is so crisp you won't mind the smaller view.	$1,799, 15-inch active-matrix LCD, 1,024 by 768 resolution. (800) 632-4636. See this issue, page 157.
Graphics Accelerator Diamond Stealth II G460	A killer 2-D and 3-D accelerator for $149? We'll take ten.	$130, Intel740 chip, 8MB RAM, 1,600 by 1,200 maximum resolution at 60Hz. (800) 468-5846. Stay tuned.

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- Windows NT Workstation
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VIDEO HARDWARE continued

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
3-D Game Card Real 3D StarFighter	Stunning 3-D for games and fast 2-D too. We want it yesterday.	$130, 8MB SDRAM, 1,600 by 1,200 maximum 2-D resolution. (800) 393-7730. See May 1998, page 90.
Multimedia Accelerator ATI All-in-Wonder Pro	The future of PC graphics: a high-speed 3-D accelerator, TV tuner, and video-capture card in one.	$279, 4MB SGRAM. (905) 882-2600. See Mar. 1998, page 198.
Video Capture Digital Processing Systems DPS Spark	Show Hollywood how it's done with this high-speed digital video editing package.	$820, 720 by 480 capture resolution, Windows 95 and NT, 32MB RAM. (800) 775-3314. See July 1997, page 103.
Presentation Projector In Focus LP420	It's like a mobile movie theater. Take your sizzling presentations on the road with this 6.8-pound wonder.	$5,999 list price, 800 by 600 SVGA resolution, 500 ANSI Lumens, 6.8 pounds. (800) 294-6400. See this issue, page 94.

COMMUNICATION HARDWARE

Well Connected You can never have too much bandwidth—not a problem with V.90, ISDN, and Fast Ethernet devices. Next up? USB modems.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
High-Speed Fax Modem 3Com U.S. Robotics 56K Faxmodem	As good as it gets on an analog line. It sets the standard for compatibility with support for x2 and V.90.	$159 for internal, $179 for external, 56Kbps, dual x2 and V.90 support. (800) 342-5877. See Jan. 1998, page 193.
Desktop Videoconferencing PictureTel Live200	Slash your travel costs in half—hold face-to-face meetings without leaving your office.	$1,195, H.320-compliant. (800) 716-6000. See Jan. 1998, page 199.
ISDN Adapter 3Com Courier I-modem with ISDN/V.90	A modem that works no matter how you need to connect: 128Kbps ISDN or 56Kbps analog.	$290 internal, $326 external, V.90 and ISDN. (800) 638-3266. Stay tuned.
LAN Adapter 3Com Fast EtherLink XL PCI TX 10/100 Network Interface Card	Moving to Fast Ethernet, but don't know when? Hedge your bets with this 10/100 network card.	$94, 10Mbps or 100Mbps. (800) 638-3266. See Jan. 1998, page 194.
PC Card Modem Ositech Communications Five of Hearts Trumpcard	If you have just one PC Card modem on the road, this is it. Fast, reliable—and it works with testy hotel PBXs.	$230, K56flex and V.90. (888) 674-8324. See Oct. 1997, page 286.
PC Card LAN Adapter Xircom CreditCard Ethernet 10/100+Modem 56	Connect to your notebook or network at either 10Mbps or 100Mbps, and go online at up to 56K.	$322, PC Card Type II slot, RJ-45 and RJ-11 jacks, upgradable to 56K standard. (800) 438-4526. See Jan. 1998, page 194.

DESKTOP APPLICATIONS

Smart Web Microsoft Office 97 is still the standard, but Lotus's new SmartSuite Millennium offers better workgroup and Web publishing features (see page 111).

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Software Suite Microsoft Office 97	The best collection of apps you'll find in one box. Don't forget to download the OSR-1 update at www.microsoft.com.	$599 for Professional Edition ($349 for upgrade), Windows 95 or NT. (800) 426-9400. See Jan. 1998, page 206.
Word Processor Microsoft Word 97	The de facto standard for businesses everywhere.	$339, Windows 95 or Windows NT 3.51, 8MB RAM, 16MB RAM for NT. (800) 426-9400. See Jan. 1997, page 87.
Spreadsheet Microsoft Excel 97	It's a one-horse race and guess who's winning? Even Lotus's upgrade of 1-2-3 can't unseat this business favorite.	$339, Windows 95 or Windows NT 3.51, 8MB RAM, 14MB RAM for NT. (800) 426-9400. See Jan. 1997, page 87.

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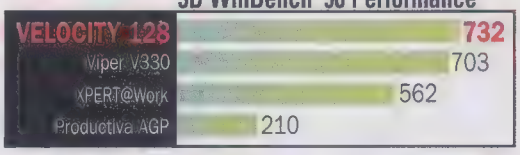

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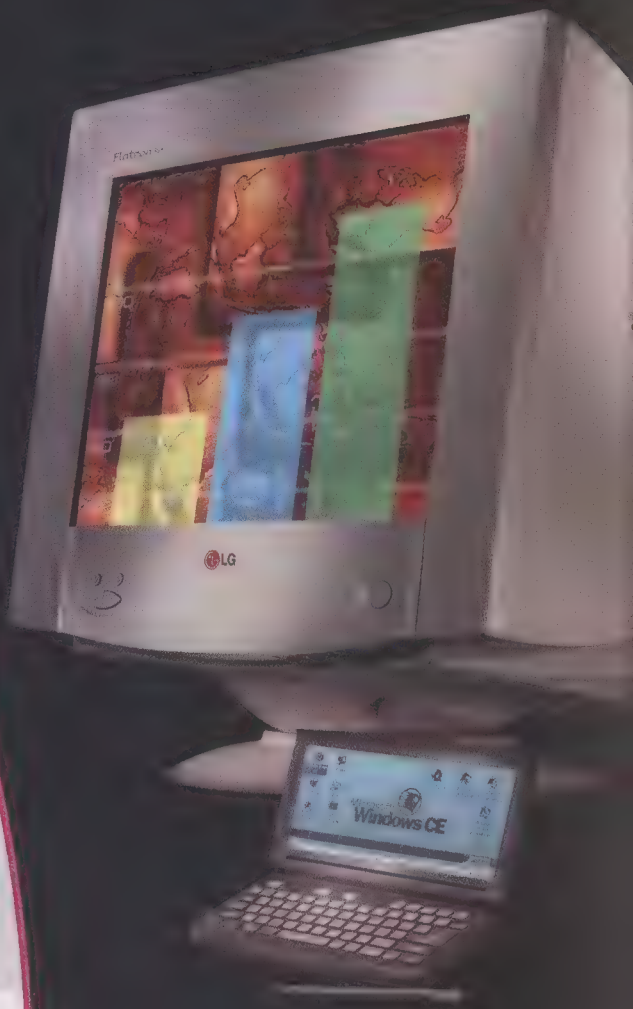

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HNOLOGY

LG makes it work better

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DESKTOP APPLICATIONS continued

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Database Microsoft Access 97	Lotus's $105 Approach 97 is easier to use, but only Access 97 lets you publish live data to the Web. It's also faster.	$339, Windows 95 or Windows NT 3.51, 12MB to 16MB RAM. (800) 426-9400. See Mar. 1997, page 171.

FINANCE SOFTWARE

Office Smarts Peachtree Office Accounting works so seamlessly with Excel and other Office apps, you'll swear it's from Microsoft.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Personal Finance Manager Intuit Quicken Home & Business 98	Go ahead, toss your checkbook. With Quicken's online banking you can write checks and reconcile your accounts.	$90, Windows 3.1 or 95, 8MB RAM, 14.4Kbps modem, CD-ROM drive. (800) 446-8848. See this issue, page 203.
Business Accounting Intuit QuickBooks 5.0	Show your CPA the door and get Quickbooks instead.	$99, 486 CPU, 8MB RAM, 34MB hard disk space. (800) 446-8848. See Mar. 1998, page 215.
Tax Software Intuit TurboTax Deluxe	Quarterly taxes due? Don't take any chances—TurboTax will help you keep more of what's coming to you.	$50, Windows 3.1 or 95. (800) 446-8848. See Feb. 1998, page 103.

NETWORK SOFTWARE

Game Over Or is it? Novell's soon-to-be-released NetWare for Small Business could give NT and BackOffice a serious challenge. Stay tuned.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Network Operating System Microsoft Windows NT Server 4.0	NT 5.0 is delayed, but NT 4.0 is still a good buy for businesses: It's stable, secure—and runs all your favorite apps.	$809 (NT Server with five clients). (800) 426-9400. See Jan. 1997, page 185.
Groupware Novell GroupWise 5.2	Share everything you always wanted to—and nothing you don't—with this powerful groupware solution.	Starting at $718 for five clients. (800) 453-1267. See Jan. 1998, page 227.
Small-Office Network Server Microsoft BackOffice Small Business Server	Everything you need to set up network e-mail, an intranet, Web hosting, and network monitoring.	$1,499 for five clients, 100MHz Pentium, 64MB RAM, 2GB hard disk space. (800) 426-9400. See Dec. 1997, page 122.
E-mail Qualcomm Eudora Pro Email 4.0	If you juggle more than one e-mail account, you need Eudora Pro. Download a free version at www.qualcomm.com.	$39 for single user, Windows 95 or Windows NT, Internet access. (800) 238-3672. See Jan. 1998, page 227.
LAN Management Tool Intel LANDesk Management Suite	Make your network manager earn his keep: One utility gives you instant feedback on the network.	$50 per node for 1,000 nodes, Windows 95 or NT. (800) 538-3373. See Apr. 1998, page 110.

PERSONAL PRODUCTIVITY SOFTWARE

Last Chance Get the free upgrade to Outlook 98 while you still can at www.microsoft.com, and get better e-mail and usability in the bargain.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Contact Manager GoldMine Software GoldMine 4.0	It does everything short of your laundry—tracks contacts, sales leads, closed deals, and even manages your e-mail.	$170, $695 for five users, Windows 95 or NT 4.0, 16MB RAM. (800) 654-3526. See Mar. 1998, page 124.
Document Manager Visioneer PaperPort Deluxe 5.1	If you can drag and drop, you can use PaperPort to get organized. File, edit, and share photos, documents, and more.	$50, Windows 95 or NT, 8MB RAM. (800) 787-7007. See Jan. 1998, page 210.

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- #9 Reality 4Mb Video
- Intel 10/100 Ethernet
- Sony 32X CDROM, Keyboard, Floppy, Mouse
- 12 Bay Tower Chassis, 600 Watt Red. Power
- Server Management Software & Alarm Avail.
- Rackmount Solution Available

$6213

- 1 Intel Pentium II 350Mhz Processor
- 512Kb Cache, Upgr. To 2 CPU's
- 64Mb SDRAM
- Slots 4 PCI 2 ISA BX Chipset
- Integrated Adaptec UW SCSI
- Integrated Intel 10/100 Ethernet
- Integrated Video
- Intel Server Mgt Hardware
- Q:(3) - 9Gb 7200 RPM LVD Removable SCSI
- Raid 5, 3 Channel controller 16Mb Cache
- Sony 32x CD-ROM
- Keyboard, Floppy, Mouse
- 12 Bay Tower Chassis 400 Watt Power

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- 1 Intel Pentium II 400Mhz Processor
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SAG ELECTRONICS

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PERSONAL PRODUCTIVITY SOFTWARE continued

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Project Manager Microsoft Project 98	Expert-level project management that's actually easy to use. View and share tasks and time lines painlessly.	$499, Windows 95, NT 3.51 or 4.0, 20MB to 40MB hard disk space. (800) 426-9400. See Dec. 1997, page 166.
Scheduler Microsoft Outlook 98	You want easy? Check your day—meetings, tasks, and new messages—from a single window. Plus, superb e-mail.	Free for a limited time, Windows 95 or NT, Internet Explorer 4.0. (800) 426-9400. See Feb. 1998, page 124.

REFERENCE AND ENTERTAINMENT CDs

Worth the Wait DVD is here with Microsoft's mother of all PC reference titles. Galactic hitchhikers, check out Doug Adams's new adventure game.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Business Reference Rand McNally Business Traveler's Suite	If you mean business when you travel, this is the disc to keep in your notebook's CD-ROM drive.	$60, Windows 95. (800) 671-5006. See Jan. 1998, page 213.
Home Reference Microsoft Encarta 98 DVD-ROM Reference Suite	Get this end-all reference collection of Bookshelf, Encarta, and an atlas on a single DVD disc.	$129, $109 for CD-ROM version, Windows 95. (800) 426-9400. See this issue, page 134.
Game Simon & Schuster Interactive Starship Titantic	Douglas Adams, author of the Hitchhiker's Guide series, brings his absurd humor to an adventure game.	$36, Windows 95. (800) 910-0099. Stay tuned.
Entertainment Valley Entertainment Eve: The Music and Art Adventure	A romp through music, art, and a bit of adventure with music man extraordinaire Peter Gabriel.	$40 list price, Windows 95 and Macintosh. (800) 357-5376. See Jan. 1998, page 213.

GRAPHICS SOFTWARE

What Makes You Click? Get your graphics ready for the Web. Today's graphics software makes it one-button easy.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Presentation Graphics Microsoft PowerPoint 97	Get your point across with a few well-done slides, or show more with links to Microsoft Office documents.	$339 ($109 upgrade), Windows 95 or NT 3.51, 8MB to 16MB RAM. (800) 426-9400. See Jan. 1998, page 214.
Personal Desktop Publisher Microsoft Publisher 98	The fastest way to publish your own pages without breaking a sweat.	$99 ($79 upgrade), Windows 95, 8MB to 16MB RAM, 40MB hard disk space, CD-ROM. (800) 426-9400. Stay tuned.
Professional Desktop Publisher Adobe PageMaker 6.5	Make your professional-quality documents look their best—in print or on the Web.	$550, Windows 95 or NT, 8MB to 16MB RAM, 26MB hard disk space. (800) 422-3623. See Jan. 1998, page 217.
Business Graphics CorelDraw 8	Whether you're a professional designer or just wish you were, this graphics suite gets the job done.	$495 ($229 upgrade), 90MHz Pentium, Windows 95 or NT 4.0, 16MB RAM. (800) 772-6735. See Dec. 1997, page 170.
Personal Photo Editor Microsoft Picture It 2.0	Don't just hide your photos away in albums. Edit them, add effects, and send them to friends and family online.	$50, Windows 95 or NT, 16MB RAM, 1MB VRAM, 90MB hard disk space. (800) 426-9400. See Jan. 1998, page 223.
Professional Photo Editor Adobe Photoshop 5.0	The best digital darkroom adds long-awaited color management features and a selective undo feature.	$550, 486 CPU, Windows 95, NT, or 3.1, 16MB RAM, 25MB hard disk space. (800) 492-3623. See Jan. 1998, page 218.
Illustration Software Adobe Illustrator 7.0	Still the vector-drawing champ for prepress illustration work.	$595 list price, Windows 95 or NT 4.0, 16MB RAM, 25MB hard disk space. (800) 649-3875. See Jan. 1998, page 218.

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TOOLS AND UTILITIES

Insurance Policy Keep your apps and the hardware running them at their peak performance with these top-tier utilities.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Windows 95 System Utility Symantec Norton Utilities 3.0 for Windows 95	Spot system trouble before it spots your data. Also in this update to the old classic: virus checking and crash protection.	$79, Windows 95, 8MB RAM, 35MB hard disk space. (800) 441-7234. See Mar. 1998, page 234.
Windows NT System Utility Symantec Norton Utilities 2.0 for Windows NT	The NT user's answer to Norton Utilities 3.0. Keep your system humming with this complete set of tools.	$99, Windows NT 4.0, 16MB RAM. (800) 441-7234. See June 1997, page 130.
Antivirus Software Quarterdeck ViruSweep	So the interface needs polish. Still, ViruSweep provides the best protection from new and undiscovered viruses.	$40, Windows 3.1 and 95, DOS 5.0, 8MB RAM, 8MB hard disk space. (800) 354-3222. See May 1998, page 124.
OCR Software Caere OmniPage Pro 8.0	Never retype again. OmniPage converts scanned pages into editable text or publishes them to your Web site.	$499 ($129 for upgrade), Windows 95 or NT 4.0, 16MB RAM, 33MB hard disk space. (800) 736-5735. See Nov. 1997, page 172.
File Utility Inso Corp. Quick View Plus 4.5	Superman has X-ray vision for peering through walls. You have Quick View Plus for peering into files.	$49, Windows 3.1, 95, or NT, 4MB RAM, 6MB hard disk space. (800) 333-1395. See Jan. 1998, page 224.
Remote-Control Software Traveling Software LapLink for Windows 95	Keep your notebook and desktop PCs on speaking terms. Sync files via a cable or dial your desktop from the road.	$149, 386 CPU, 8MB RAM, 7MB hard disk space. (800) 343-8080. See Jan. 1997, page 156.
Application Development Tool Microsoft Visual Basic 5.0 Professional Edition	Visualize better custom apps. This version adds dockable toolbars and the ability to edit multiple projects at once.	$499, Windows 95 or Windows NT, 30MB to 220MB hard disk space. (800) 426-9400. See June 1997, page 125.

WEB BROWSERS AND UTILITIES

Hot Babes! Get Rich Quick! Sound familiar? Filter out the flotsam from your e-mail with antispam utilities like Omron Advanced Systems' MailJail.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Web Browser Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0	It's free. It's easy. And it's included in Windows 98. Also packs Outlook Express, a nifty e-mail manager.	Free, Windows 95, Windows 98, or Windows NT. (800) 426-9400. See Jan. 1998, page 117.
Internet Utility Omron Advanced Systems MailJail 2.3	Filter out junk e-mail quickly and easily. Works with Qualcomm Eudora and Microsoft Outlook.	$20, Windows 95 or Windows NT, works with Eudora 4.0 and Outlook 98. (408) 727-6644. Stay tuned.
Newsgroup Reader Microsoft Outlook Express	Get right to the good stuff on the Net. Works within Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 and it's free.	Free. Windows 95, Windows 98, or Windows NT. (800) 426-9400. See Jan. 1998, page 117.
Security/Encryption Network Associates PGP for Personal Privacy 5.5	Keep snoops out of your Internet e-mail and other private information online.	$40, public-key cryptography, digital signatures. (408) 988-3832. See Oct. 1997, page 172.

WEB SEARCH ENGINES AND SERVICES

Time to Switch? AOL upped its monthly service fees from $2 to $21.95. A cheaper option: Yahoo Online offers unlimited monthly access for $14.95.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Search Engine Wired Digital HotBot	Can't find what you're looking for? Stop what you're doing and head to www.hotbot.com.	Free, www.hotbot.com. See Jan. 1998, page 238.
Web Accelerator Web3000 NetSonic 1.0	Give your Web connection a shot in the arm. NetSonic caches your favorite pages and links before you need them. It's free too.	Free, works with any browser. (425) 836-3000, www.web3000.com. Stay tuned.

*ESTIMATED STREET PRICE.

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Thinnovation. You already know that Mitsubishi practically wrote the book on award-winning CRT monitor design. Now we've combined dazzling image quality, higher contrast and extraordinary brightness in a fraction of the size. Featuring a distortion-free TFT active matrix screen, increased color clarity and crystal-clear, flicker-free images, Mitsubishi's 14" and 15" LCD models (LCD40 and LCD50) are ideally suited for any application where space is at a premium. In fact, the ultra-thin LCD monitors use nearly 90% less desktop space than a standard CRT display. Mitsubishi's LCD monitors offer a true display solution for anyone looking for high-performance in a compact, lightweight design. Contact Mitsubishi Electronics today and we'll send you the condensed version of our latest monitor success story.

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*QWIK**FAX**: 1-800-937-2094 (Document #1015)*

Mitsubishi LCDs	LCD40	LCD50
Viewable size	14.0"	15.0"
Max Resolution	1024 x 768/75 Hz NI	1024 x 768/75 Hz NI
Weight	9.9 lbs.(4.5kg)	11.7 lbs.(5.3kg)
Dimensions (H,W,D)	14.7" x 14.0" x 6.3"	15.4" x 14.7" x 6.3"
Brightness	180 cd/m²	200 cd/m²
Viewing Angle	H: ±70° V: +60° -50°	H: ±70° V: +70° -50°
LCD Type	TFT Active Matrix	TFT Active Matrix

MITSUBISHI
DISPLAY PRODUCTS
Innovation On Display℠

Infolink 318 at: www.pccomputing.com/infolink

Designed for Microsoft Windows 95 Mac OS

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continued from page 62

WEB SEARCH ENGINES AND SERVICES continued

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
National Online Service America Online	Twelve million users can't be wrong. Better yet, AOL is rolling out limited trials of ADSL service—at up to 9Mbps.	$21.95 per month for unlimited access, $9.95 per month for unlimited AOL access. (800) 827-6364. See Jan. 1998, page 238.
National Internet Service Provider UUNet Technologies	No busy signals. Fast service. Reasonable rates. What more do you need in a national ISP?	$30 per month for 25 hours, Web hosting starts at $300 per month. (800) 488-6383. See Jan. 1998, page 240.
News Service Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition	Web content worth paying for. The Journal's Interactive Edition will boost your business and make you look smart.	$49 per year, $29 per year for *Wall Street Journal* subscribers. www.wsj.com. See Jan. 1998, page 240.
Financial Service E*Trade	You should make a killing in the markets, not your broker. Get E*Trade and get more of what's coming to you.	$14.95 per trade for up to 5,000 shares. (800) 387-2331, www.etrade.com. See Jan. 1998, page 242.

WEB COMMUNICATIONS

Talk Is Cheap Internet phones from Aplio and InnoMedia have everything you need to make long-distance calls for free (page 123).

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Internet E-mail Microsoft Outlook Express	Hurry—time is running out. Microsoft is giving away this e-mail manager only until June 30 at www.microsoft.com.	Free, Windows 95 or NT, Macintosh, Internet access. (800) 426-9400. Stay tuned.
Internet Phone Microsoft NetMeeting 2.1	Compare notes, rough out ideas on a whiteboard, and exchange files over the Internet. Also, it's included with IE4.	Free, Windows 95 or Windows NT. (800) 426-9400. Stay tuned.
Internet Fax FaxSav Internet Suite of Services	Your marketing department of one can get the word out to a cast of thousands—in minutes—with FaxSav's broadcast faxing.	Free for software, 15 cents per page for domestic faxes. (800) 828-7115. See Sept. 1997, page 188.
Internet Videoconferencing White Pine Software CU-SeeMe 3.1	Deliver the quarterly sales figures to all remote offices at once. It's easy with a camera and CU-SeeMe.	$79, $69 download at www.cuseeme.com. (800) 241-7463. See Jan. 1998, page 237.

WEB DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Why Pay for Retail Space? Sell your services online and you won't have to. Microsoft's Site Server makes it (almost) easy.

Top Pick	The Buzz	The Stats*
Web Publisher Microsoft FrontPage 98	The only Web publishing suite that wraps hand-holding wizards around powerful site creation and management tools.	$149 ($55 for upgrade), Windows 95 or Windows NT 4.0. (800) 426-9400. See Nov. 1997, page 189.
Web Server Software Microsoft Internet Information Server 4.0	The best Web server on the planet is also free if you run NT.	Free for NT Server users. Windows NT 4.0, 486 CPU, 16MB RAM. (800) 426-9400. See Jan. 1998, page 246.
Site Management Utility Tetranet Software Linkbot 3.5	If you have just one site maintenance utility, this should be it. Watch for Wisebot, a task automation utility.	$250, Windows 95 or NT. (888) 245-5550. See Jan. 1998, page 242.
Commerce Server Microsoft Site Server Commerce Edition 3.0	Everything you need to serve up a super-selling site on the Web in a matter of hours. Really.	$4,609, Windows NT 4.0, Internet Explorer. (800) 426-9400. See June 1998, page 98.
Web Animation Software Macromedia Flash 3	Add quick and easy animations to your Web site—no art degree required.	$299, Windows 95 or Windows NT, 486 CPU, 16MB RAM. (800) 457-1774. See Jan. 1998, page 244.
Java Development Symantec Visual Café for Java 2.5 Pro	Build applets any way you want with brute-force scripting or drag-and-drop visual tools.	$300, Windows 95 or NT, 90MHz Pentium, 24MB RAM, 30MB hard disk space. (800) 441-7234. See Jan. 1998, page 244.

*ESTIMATED STREET PRICE.

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Powered by the 233MHz or 266MHz Intel Pentium® processor with MMX™ technology

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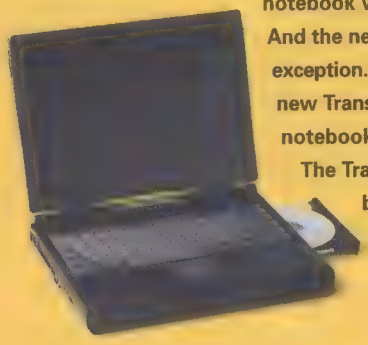
"The TransPort Trek is the fastest budget notebook we've run through our mill"
-PC World, Ranked #1 April '98††

Geeks, experts and industry pundits all agree that Micron makes the world's best notebooks. We've won the coveted *PC Magazine* Editors' Choice award for practically every notebook we've ever released. And the new TransPort Trek is no exception. *PC World* just ranked the new TransPort Trek the #1 budget notebook available today.[1] The TransPort Trek is the single best desktop replacement notebook you can buy.



TransPort® Trek™

Common Features included on all TransPort Systems:

- 512KB L2 pipeline burst cache
- PCI bus with 128-bit graphics accelerator
- USB, parallel, serial, VGA, PS/2, ports
- S-Video Out; MPEG compatible
- CardBus and Zoomed Video ready
- Wavetable/3D Positional sound
- Microphone, stereo line-in & line-out jacks
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- 20X modular CD-ROM drive
- 2-way infrared port
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- Modular floppy drive
- Li-Ion battery
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Trek 233	Trek 233	Trek 266
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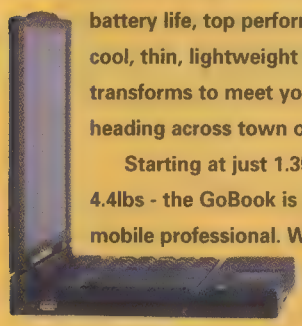

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- 12.1" SVGA display
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- USB, parallel, serial, VGA, PS/2, NTSC/S-Video, ports
- S-Video Out; MPEG compatible
- CardBus/Zoomed Video ready
- 16 bit stereo/Wavetable sound
- Microphone, stereo line in/out jacks
- 24X modular CD-ROM drive
- 2 Type II or 1 Type III PCMCIA slots
- 2-way infrared port
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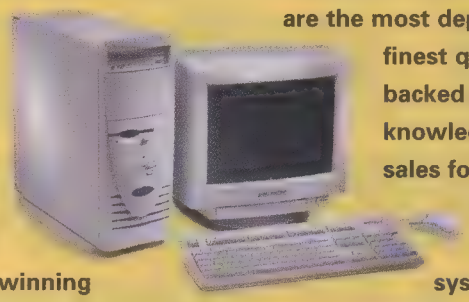

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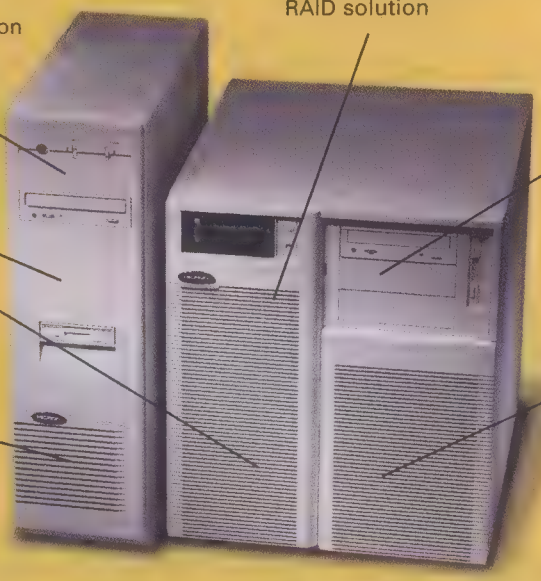

intel inside pentium® II

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- Intel 440BX PCI chip set
- 512KB integrated L2 ECC cache
- 100MHz front side Bus
- Integrated Symbios Ultra-Wide SCSI-3 dual channel controller
- RAID capable
- 5 expansion slots: 3 PCI, 1 ISA, 1 shared PCI/ISA
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- 5 hot-swap hard drive bays
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- Integrated SVGA graphics (2MB)
- Integrated Intel 10/100 Ethernet
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- Dual processor capable
- 64MB ECC SDRAM
- 4GB Ultra-Wide SCSI-3 hard drive
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- NOS support (3 first-year incident resolutions), 7x24
- 512KB integrated L2 ECC cache
- Memory: ECC, EDO or SDRAM option
- 9 expansion slots: 6 PCI, 2 ISA, 1 shared ISA/PCI
- Dual Integrated Symbios Ultra-Wide SCSI-3 controller, 1 narrow
- Intel EtherExpress Pro 100 network adapter
- 32X EIDE CD-ROM drive
- RAID capable
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- Dedicated server technical support, 7x24
- 5-year/3-year Micron Power limited warranty
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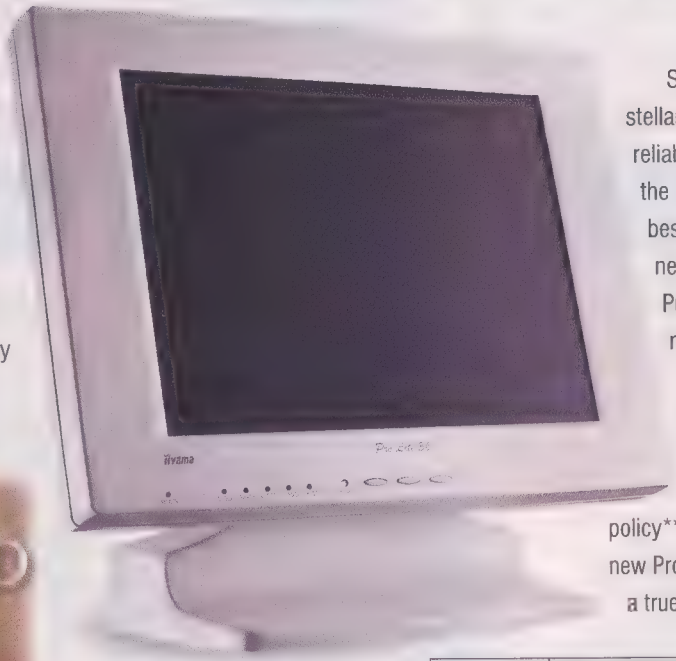

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Dot Clock	79MHz maximum
Power Consumption	27 W maximum Power Management: 6W (max)
Dimensions/Net Weight	15.4" x 14.2" x 7.8" (W x H x D) / 2.3 lbs.
Tilt-Swivel Angle	Upward: 30 degrees
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Infolink 129 at: www.pccomputing.com/infolink

Windows 1040

Slurp. It's open season on Microsoft. Every headline-hogging two-bit political hack is slobbering for a bite before all the other government vultures and hyenas chow down. These days the only way Microsoft execs can keep a stiff upper lip is by munching Viagra. The Justice Department Keystone Kops, who haven't exactly distinguished themselves in this administration, have decided to attack the one company that most changed the world and helped the U.S. economy blossom. Top Kop Joel Kline smacked his lips recently over how stomping Microsoft was as beneficial as the breakup of AT&T. Sorry, Joel, but after the government-imposed breakup, telephone service, which used to be a model of efficiency, is in the toilet. Some benefit.

Microsoft is far from perfect. And they're currently trying to fob off a bug release of Windows as a thrilling new upgrade. Which it's not, unless you just can't go on living without having dual displays on your desk.

Crash Course This time they've added some chrome, hooked up gewgaws like USB and DVD, and tossed in a browser (an act Kline pegs as the crime of the century). But they've totally ignored the worst usability nightmares. Explorer is still a kludge. Briefcase is still a basket case. Security isn't the least bit secure. Help's a mess. Upgrading your apps from one system to another is still a horror show. One of their big selling points? "It crashes less." Can't argue with that, but how about "It doesn't crash at all"? Still, is that a reason to bust them?

OK, Microsoft is also a formidable marketer. They're heavy-handed at times, but this is big business, not flower arranging. The whining these days is from competitors who simply don't measure up. Many are exquisitely arrogant, greedy, or just plain incompetent.

What in the world does Kline think he's going to accomplish? Breaking up the vast company into a few giant ones with all their assets, talent, and know-how wouldn't change anything.

Paul Somerson

Do you really want the **government's big snout** in the PC tent, with all its quotas and **red tape?**

But do you really want the government's big snout in the PC tent? With all its quotas and red tape and political correctness and waste? Could you imagine the utter insanity if the feds controlled our software?

First, there'd be a huge patronage-based bureaucracy to administer the thing. You couldn't just buy software. Instead you'd have to fill out a 20-page form and mail it in, then wait 6 to 8 months. When it finally came, it wouldn't be packaged on CDs, which critics would paint as elitist, but on 150 floppies.

Special interest groups would challenge every aspect of it, starting with language. English would lose out as the government required it to be delivered in hundreds of dialects. File management would be in Apache, Wizards in Tagalog, Help in Ebonics.

Religious groups would remove the Abort option. Do-gooder give-'em-an-A-for-just-showing-up teachers would prevent anyone from selecting Fail. As a result, all errors would endlessly retry. Disability lawsuits would eliminate all keyboards, mice, and other input devices except buggy speech recognition.

Up the River Making illegal copies would land you in Leavenworth. The FBI would make sure all passwords were transmitted over modems so they could read your files. Unions would get their legislators to forbid installing or customizing anything yourself.

File formats would change every week to celebrate diversity. Screen savers would pop up every few minutes lauding big contributors like teachers' and lawyers' groups, Big Tobacco, and the NRA.

Progressive pricing would be implemented. Suburban users would pay up the wazoo, while disadvantaged buyers would get both the software and a check. Lesser software firms would get paid to not create products. And the manual would be 70,000 pages long and written by the IRS.

Maybe the smartest thing Bill can do is offer to let the government run things for a year or two. We'll all come crawling back and begging him to take over. It could happen.

E-mail somerson@zd.com

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID PERRY

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Blind Date

On the Internet, no one knows you're a dog. That nubile ballerina you've been e-mailing could really be a 45-year-old brick layer with a goatee. Not a few online lawyers run their practices from the pokey. People who describe themselves in chat rooms as good-looking, athletic, or rich rarely are. Even more troubling than the whacked disguises people don in cyberspace is their ability to remain entirely anonymous. This is especially annoying when you're trying to squeeze them for cash.

Some 75 million souls now surf the Web, making cyberspace more populous than England or France. Growing armies of these people would like to spend their euros, dollars, and yen online. And many of them do. But what do you really know about these ethereal customers?

Registration pages don't tell you anything. Most people have enough sense to duck them, anyway. Besides, those who go to the trouble of filling out your nosy form typically lie. A recent study found that 40 percent of surfers who filled out registration forms supplied information that was as colorful as Bill Clinton's sex life.

Early stabs at Internet demographics weren't very useful, either. Five years ago, you could have spent $35,000 for a marketing study that told you most Web surfers knew how to operate PCs. Many of them had e-mail addresses. The overwhelming majority of them used their computers at work and/or at home. Most of the systems used for surfing the Net ran some version of Windows, though a small percentage were Macintoshes.

Armed with penetrating insights such as these, you were ready to go make your fortune in cyberspace.

But marketing studies about the Net have gotten better. And there are tons of them in circulation now, which means that when a fact smells fishy, you can cross-reference it. Some of the best studies paint a very specific picture of who's surfing the Web. And they pitch up plenty of surprises.

They're not just randy adolescent boys. Your average surfer is 36 years old with a household income of $53,000. Nearly half of all Netizens bring in more than $50,000 a year—well over the national average. About half are also married. Seventy-three percent have at least a college education. And almost 50 percent of the Net's population are . . . female—up from a mere 5 percent in 1994. Mall rats they're not.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID PERRY

Nearly **half** of all Netizens bring in more than **$50,000** a year. **Mall rats** they're not.

You're not the love of their lives. As much as they enjoy spending money online, 73 percent of all surfers use the Net to pursue hobbies; 63 percent fetch news; 61 percent research information for work; and 50 percent plan trips. Nearly half connect to the Internet every day.

They're cranky. Despite the amount of time they spend online, in one study only 43 percent of Web users described their overall satisfaction with the online world as very good or excellent. That's low compared to satisfaction rates with TVs, radios, or even—believe it or not—PCs.

They prefer humans to paw their plastic. While shoppers dropped $3.3 billion online last year, another $4.2 billion was spent in street stores *after* surfers had researched the purchased product online. Seventy-one percent of people go online to research products and services as opposed to using a local directory. In 1997 this figure was 47 percent. Why the dramatic growth? Online shoppers cite convenience, the availability of information, no sales pressure, and time savings as the chief advantages.

They're cheap. A new pricing survey shows 73 percent of Internet products were marked at a lower price than their retail counterparts. Web consumers know that there are economies to setting up shop online—and expect you to pass the savings along to them.

They're busy. The latest figures from America Online show that 40 percent of its 12 million shoppers buy between 10 p.m. and 10 a.m., when street stores—and offices—are closed.

They're impatient. Click, click, gone. The main reason surfers cite for cutting short a visit: pages that are too slow to load. You can always find the same product at a better-managed site, the reasoning goes. Another deal breaker is a site that forces surfers to click through multiple pages for simple information. Bottom line: Fast-loading pages and a snappy server are two of the best investments you can make in a site to suck in profits all the faster.

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Vanity Fair

Some describe them as personal Web pages, some as vanity pages, and some as just plain horrible. They're the Web sites people put up to extol themselves or, more often, their cat. I've made a point of studying vanity pages and have even done one of my own to promote various columns I write (including this one). You can see it at www.dvorak.org if you ever get bored. Most interesting are the really bad vanity pages high school girls named Kimberly or Jennifer or Ashley or Skye put up. It's good to see more women and girls getting interested in computers. A lot of guys put up pages too, but they don't seem as precious.

Most ISPs give their users server space for a Web site. This trend began years ago when America Online offered 10MB per account free for personal Web pages. Now on AOL you'll find everything from great joke pages to good link pages to hookers soliciting Johns in the L.A. basin for $200 an hour plus tip.

Vanity pages can be more entertaining than prime-time TV. And now there's an emerging phenomenon called Web rings, whereby people create a circle of interest, usually around a rock star or an actor, and link elaborately to each other.

In the process of looking at vanity pages you'll come across three other types of personal pages worth examining—the grudge page, the hate page, and the obsession page. An obsession page is the modern equivalent of a celebrity altar put in the closet by a would-be serial killer. Someone falls in love with a celebrity—Jennifer Aniston, Yasmine Bleeth, and Leonardo DiCaprio are typical—and they post pictures, information, and commentary telling you why they think this person (whom they've never met and are never likely to meet) is so great. Most of these are real eye-rollers.

Still, vanity pages are my favorite. If you want to do your own, I can help. To keep up with the best of them, be sure to include these common elements:

John C. Dvorak

An **obsession page** is the equivalent of the **celebrity altar** a would-be **serial killer** puts in the closet.

Cats No vanity site is taken seriously unless it has cat pictures with cute comments about the cat. The cat should have an idiotic cat name like Fluffy or Muffy or Pumpkin or Snowball. Some people like to write the cat comments in first person: "Hi, I'm Fluffy. I'm Jennifer's favorite. I like to lick myself and sit on the TV when not chasing mice." Done right, the cat page reflects the fact that you have too much time on your hands and lead a pretty dull life.

Clip Art A good vanity page needs a lot of mediocre clip art. At the top center of the page you usually find drawings and animation stolen from copyrighted material. Seldom does the Web page have a picture of the person. This is usually added later, buried under a link called "Pictures of Me!"

Backgrounds It's crucial that a vanity page have an awful background—a garish mess is best. If you insist on being tasteful, keep it sentimental. Pooh bears or a baby blue background with light pink hearts, for example, will work. Clouds are also popular.

Poetry No good vanity page exists without a lot of poems that stink to high heaven. Many come under a home page link called "Poems by Me!" Advanced users have a link called "Poems About My Cat!"

Links Besides the array of self-promotional links such as "More Pictures of Me!" and "What People Say About Me!" you need good links to other vanity sites. This is usually done after you show a few friends how to make their own vanity page and you link to theirs. They, in turn, link to yours. "My Friend Suzie's Page—She Is Really Neat!" would be a typical link. Advanced users might link to a Kahlil Gibran site, a cat site, or a Beanie Babies site.

Mailbox All vanity sites have a mail-to link symbolized by an animated mail icon of some sort. Why anyone would send mail to these people mystifies me, but they do. It's usually to tell them about their cats having the same name.

These tips should get you started. If we all do our part we can clog up the Net and maybe even bring it down with this stuff. It will be the only way to get rid of it.

E-mail pccdvorak@zd.com

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID PERRY

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New!

Windows 98: Worth the

SNEAK PREVIEW

If you liked Windows 95, you'll love Windows 98. That's not to say it's perfect—far from it. But the latest incarnation of the world's most popular operating system fixes many of the bugs and annoyances that plague Windows 95 users, and it's absolutely essential for systems that incorporate new hardware advances like DVD players and USB peripherals.

Windows 98 uses the same core system components as Windows 95, so it's compatible with virtually every 32-bit Windows program. For Windows 95 users it's a risk-free upgrade, but are its many small improvements worth the $109 upgrade price? We tested a final release candidate build of Windows 98.

Ready, Set Upgrading from Windows 95 was quick and painless, even on older test machines. After getting past the opening dialog boxes, the slick, streamlined setup routine operates on its own, detecting hardware and rebooting automatically. Even on slow machines, the complete upgrade takes less than an hour. Don't lose the jewel box for the Windows 98 CD, though: Before setup will proceed you have to type in a 25-character Product Key. And don't bypass the step that creates a startup disk—unlike boot disks created under Windows 95, this one recognizes most CD-ROMs.

In marked contrast to previous versions of Windows, we had no problems setting up a network. When the Setup program detected an Ethernet card, it automatically configured the drivers, added a default network client, and installed the TCP/IP protocol. We didn't have to fuss with IP addresses either, because Windows 98's AutoNet feature automatically assigned private addresses that worked flawlessly with the rest of the network.

Power users and network administrators should check out the Windows 98 Resource Kit for a powerful new utility called Batch 98. This easy-to-use tool lets you script every step of the setup process.

Performance Penalties Our Windows 98 systems performed most operations noticeably faster than they did when running Windows 95 with Internet Explorer 4.01. But neither system could come close to the perceived performance of a system running the original Windows 95 shell. Our conclusion? The IE4 interface extracts a performance penalty, and speed-obsessed users need to add memory and CPU power to keep pace.

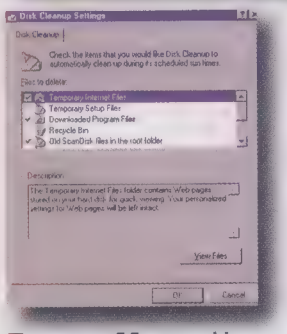
On systems running the original retail release of Windows 95, the Windows 98 upgrade had a huge payback: When we ran the FAT32 conversion utility on disk partitions larger than 1GB, we typically saw increases in free disk space of at least 30 percent.

Does this OS crash less often than Windows 95? It's too soon to tell for certain. Windows 98 is slightly more robust because its core components include nearly three years' worth of bug fixes and updates. And when the OS or applications do crash, you'll have an easier time troubleshooting, thanks to an impressive collection of new system utilities.

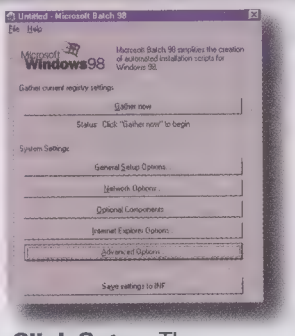
The comprehensive System Information utility, for example, let us check the integrity of system files, track down and repair version conflicts, and fine-tune startup options for troubleshooting. We also successfully used the Windows Update feature to detect and install new drivers and patches to core system files.

If you've already upgraded

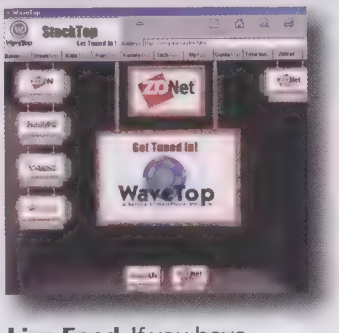
GUIDED TOUR WINDOWS 98



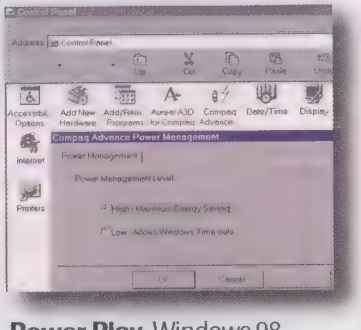
Tune-up Master Use the Maintenance Wizard to scan for disk problems, defrag files, and clean up clutter.



Slick Setup The Batch 98 utility lets administrators create scripts to automate custom installations.



Live Feed If you have a TV tuner card, use the WaveTop software to view Web pages without an Internet connection.



Power Play Windows 98 actively manages power on desktop and notebook PCs, but you need an up-to-date ACPI system for best results.

Guide to PC Computing's Ratings

Excellent *Market leader that offers exceptional performance* ..... ★★★★★

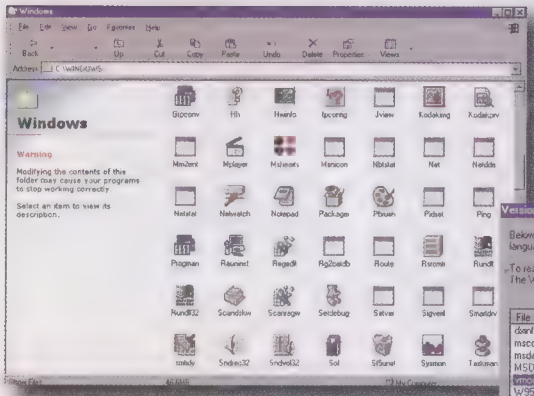
Good *Excels in many areas; a good buy* ..... ★★★★

Acceptable *Average for its class; a justifiable purchase* ..... ★★★

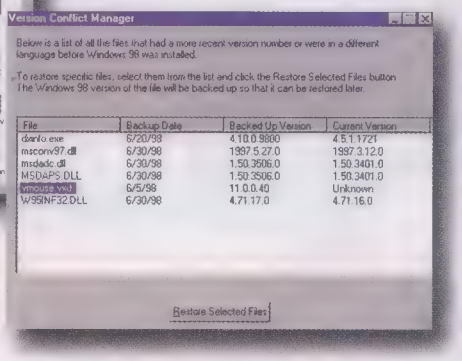
Poor *Out-of-date or substandard; offset by some positive features* ..... ★★

Unacceptable *Missing necessary features; avoid* ..... ★

Wait?



Internet Ready With Windows 98, IE4 is no longer just an option. Web View, for example, is the default setting for Explorer, which lets you view Web pages and local file folders in the same window.



Mr. Fix It New troubleshooting utilities, like this tool for identifying version conflicts, help prevent and repair configuration problems quickly.

Windows 98

★★★★☆

Verdict: A welcome—but pricey—upgrade to Windows 95, and an absolute must-have for new systems.

Pros: Fixes bugs in Windows 95; slick setup; supports new hardware and multimedia.

Cons: Only slightly less crash prone than Windows 95; steep upgrade cost; high resource demands.

System Requirements: 66MHz 486 CPU, 16MB of RAM, 120MB to 355MB of hard disk space.

$209 est. street price, $109 for upgrade
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Windows with Internet Explorer 4.0, you won't find many surprises in the Windows 98 user interface. All the familiar IE4 features are there, including the single-click option for desktop icons, the Active Desktop, and the Active Channel bar. Some advanced options are new, and there are a few new icons, some cosmetic changes (especially in Web View templates), and a collection of wizards (including the Internet Connection Wizard) that have been redesigned for increased usability. New on the Windows 98 desktop is the My Documents icon—a new shell extension that lets users define and quickly access the folder where applications store data files.

TV Land Among the most intriguing add-ons to Windows 98 is a trio of features that work with TV broadcast signals. The most obvious addition is Web TV for Windows, which works in conjunction with a TV tuner card like the ATI All-in-Wonder, letting you view TV programs in a window or in full-screen mode. Windows 98 also incorporates Intel's Intercast technology, which adds HTML content alongside the TV window. CNN, MTV, and at least ten other cable channels already offer this enhanced viewing mode.

There's also WavePhore's WaveTop software, which uses a cable connection to download content from brand-name Internet sites (ZDNet and The Wall Street Journal, for example) and displays it in a modified version of Internet Explorer. In the release candidate we tested, all three features were fully enabled, but we encountered numerous bugs and setup hassles. Expect the first Windows 98 Service Pack to include significant updates to all these components.

Every time you upgrade a peripheral, you'll appreciate the expanded driver library and new hardware support in Windows 98. If you're planning to add USB peripherals, for example, Windows 98 is a must. It's also the first version of Windows to include a DVD player. And Windows 98's support for code signing makes it possible to verify that a new driver has passed Microsoft's compatibility tests before you install it.

Where Windows 95 supported a handful of power-management features, Windows 98 actively manages power. Those benefits will be most pronounced on systems that fully comply with the Advanced Configuration and Power Interface (ACPI). Although Microsoft claims that Windows 98 is fully backward compatible with systems that support the Advanced Power Management spec, we had trouble with power management on some older notebooks.

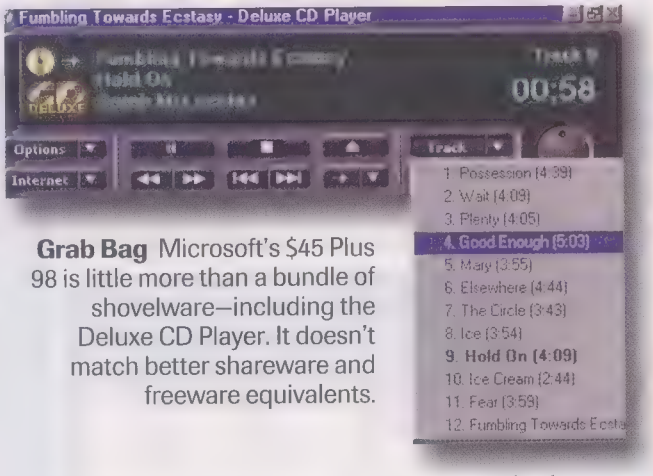
Worth the Upgrade? For new hardware buyers, Windows 98 is an absolute must—don't even think of buying a new system with Windows 95. For upgraders, though, the decision is more difficult. Windows 98 requires more CPU power, memory, and disk space, and for older hardware—including 486 and Pentium-based systems running at 100MHz or less—Windows 95 runs faster. For anyone still running the original retail release of Windows 95, the benefits of the FAT32 conversion utility alone make this a worthwhile upgrade.

If you've embraced IE4 and you have the hardware to run it, the improved system utilities and setup tools in Windows 98 make the upgrade worthwhile. But don't expect miracles—for all its improvements, Windows 98 is not far removed from Windows 95, and that means it's still far from crashproof. For the best multitasking performance and true crash protection, skip Windows 98 and head for Windows NT. **ED BOTT**

Plus 98: Too Many Minuses

SNEAK PREVIEW

Microsoft Plus 98 deserves a place in history alongside all the other sequels that should never have been made: *Rescue from Gilligan's Island*, *Free Willy 3*, and any movie with *Rambo* or *Rocky* in its title. Its predecessor, Plus 95, was an indispensable add-on to the original release of Windows 95; this year's model, though, is a thoroughly trivial collection of undistinguished utilities, eye candy, and stripped-down versions of other software.



Grab Bag Microsoft's $45 Plus 98 is little more than a bundle of shovelware—including the Deluxe CD Player. It doesn't match better shareware and freeware equivalents.

Shovelware At an estimated retail price of $45, it's one of the worst software values we've ever seen. Of all the third-party utilities shoveled onto the Plus 98 CD, the most appealing is McAfee VirusScan. It's a fully licensed copy of a deservedly popular antivirus program, with free access to six months' worth of updates. But is it really a deal? Thanks to aggressive price-cutting and rebate programs, we've seen the same software practically given away, and either way you eventually need to pay for updates to get the most out of it.

If you listen to audio CDs through your PC's sound system, you'll be attracted to the Deluxe CD Player. It replaces the bare-bones CD Player with a colorful applet that does everything you'd expect from a high-end home audio system. If you have an Internet connection, Deluxe CD Player displays title and track information for most popular CDs. Like other packages in this collection, though, there are capable shareware alternatives, including Obvion Systems' DiscPlay 4—a steal at $15.

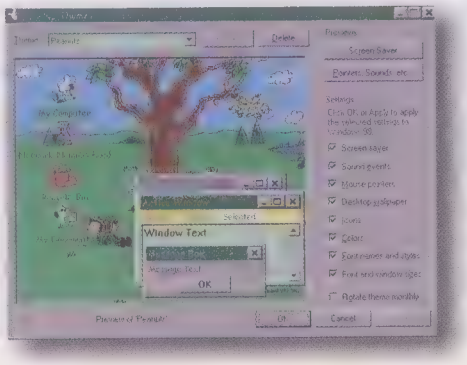
Installing the Compressed Folders option fixes a glaring weakness in the Explorer. This set of file-management libraries adds ZIP compression capabilities to the Windows shell. ZIP files look and act like directories, and the add-in does a great job with downloaded ZIP files. It's not enough to make us give up WinZip, though.

Other system-level improvements include minor enhancements to the Maintenance Wizard, most notably a utility that organizes the Start menu automatically. Plus 98 also adds a small piece of CyberMedia's UnInstaller to the Windows 98 Disk Cleanup tool, letting you automatically clean up noncritical files.

Dig deep enough into the grab bag and you'll find two games: SegaSoft's Lose Your Marbles, a Tetris-like test of dexterity and reaction time with dazzling graphics and sound, and Spider Solitaire, a challenging two-deck solo card game, which is at least 100 times more difficult than the Solitaire in Windows 95. Either one is a worthwhile diversion, but hard-core gamers will be underwhelmed.

Plus 95 introduced the concept of Desktop Themes, and the updated package adds 18 new themes. If you flip to the comic pages first thing each morning, you'll appreciate the wallpaper, mouse pointers, sounds, and icons from *Cathy*, *Garfield*, *Peanuts*, *Doonesbury*, and *FoxTrot*. There's also a gallery of high-quality photos from Corbis Photography and PhotoDisc. If you can live without this extra window dressing, though, stick with Win98, which already includes the 95-vintage theme changer and themes. Other pieces include a lightweight version of Microsoft's consumer-oriented Picture It image-editing package. Picture It Express lets you scan and manipulate photos and other images.

Buyer Beware Does Microsoft really need more money from every Windows user on the planet? Some of the features in this collection should have been bundled with Windows itself, and others are done better by small developers like Nico Mak and Obvion Systems, who don't need to be stomped on by Microsoft. Skip this overpriced, underpowered collection and support your local shareware dealer. **ED BOTT**



Pointless Pointers Plus 98 is packed with new themes—collections of icons, pointers, sounds, and other fritterware drawn from the comics.

FILEBOX

Microsoft Plus 98

☆☆

Verdict: High-class shovelware—you're better off with shareware alternatives.

Pros: A convenient way to add virus protection and support for ZIP files directly into Windows 98; includes six months of McAfee VirusScan updates.

Cons: Overpriced; several "lite" components are little more than teasers for their full, more costly versions.

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matrox

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Win98 Dream Machine

SNEAK PREVIEW

If Windows 98 needs a poster child, Compaq's Presario 5600 Series fills the bill perfectly. Stepping through the feature list for these high-end consumer-focused PCs is like ticking off the roster of high-end hardware features in Microsoft's latest Windows upgrade. Digital audio and FireWire support? Check. DVD? Got it. Fast Internet access? Just push a button. Acres of memory and storage? Absolutely.

Fully Loaded Although Compaq will ship some off-the-rack models, the system we tested included custom options that Compaq plans to build on demand, after customers place orders on kiosks in retail outlets. This system is loaded for bear, with a 400MHz Pentium II, 128MB of SDRAM, a 12GB IBM Deskstar drive, and digital sound. The system we tested included an ATI Rage Pro LT graphics card, but Compaq promises that shipping models will also be available with a 4MB Diamond Monster 3D II AGP adapter upgradable to 8MB of SGRAM.

This is the first system we've seen that offers a flat-panel monitor as a checklist item. The 15-inch display was crisp, sharp, and impressively thin and lightweight, but it still cost nearly double what we would have paid for a CRT of equal size. The display comes with a stand for desktop use; you have to look elsewhere for mounting hardware to attach it to a swivel arm or to a wall, though—Compaq supplies only the VESA-standard connectors.

Room to Grow Inside the sleek, easy-open tower case, you find plenty of breathing room. An unusual curved vent sits directly over the CPU slot and directs air to a second fan. One of the two PCI slots is already occupied by a 56Kbps modem, while two ISA slots are free for legacy devices. That doesn't sound like much expansion room, but this system's designers assume you'll add devices through the front-panel USB ports and FireWire (IEEE 1394) connectors instead of relying on add-in cards. You won't need to use up a slot for your network card, either—10Base-T Ethernet support is integrated onto the motherboard.

Leave extra room on the desktop for the oversize Easy Access Internet Keyboard. Besides the standard 104 keys you'd expect, it features four buttons preprogrammed to handle common Internet tasks. The Instant Internet button fires up Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 and connects to the default ISP. Other buttons launch the default e-mail client, take you to Compaq's secure shopping mall, and connect with your preferred search engine. You can reprogram all the buttons to your liking.

Naturally, the system includes a DVD drive with a Compaq-branded player applet. Use the row of buttons along the top of the keyboard to play, pause, skip tracks, and adjust volume through the JBL Pro speakers. If you've got a camcorder, plug it into a front-panel FireWire connector and use the bundled video-editing software to create your own videos.

With its fast processor, 512K L2 cache, and 100MHz bus (thanks to the Intel 440BX chip set), we expected sizzling performance from this system. Surprisingly, its test scores were lower than virtually all of its competitors in this class. If you're obsessed with speed, the Dell Dimension XPS R400, which ran nearly 15 percent faster under Windows 98, is a better choice.

On the other hand, if you want instant Internet access and cutting-edge multimedia performance in Windows 98, look no further. Compaq has defined the standard. **ED BOTT**

The Future Is Here Compaq's Presario 5600 Series PC is a tour of the best new things in Windows 98: digital audio, DVD, FireWire and USB ports, and AGP graphics.

FILEBOX

Compaq Presario 5600 Series

☆☆☆☆

Verdict: The poster child PC for Windows 98—we just wish it were as fast as other PCs in its class.

Pros: One-step Internet access; flat-panel display; support for nearly every Win98 hardware standard.

Cons: Pricey and a step slower than other systems in its class.

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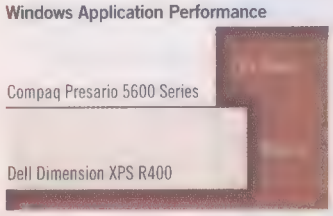
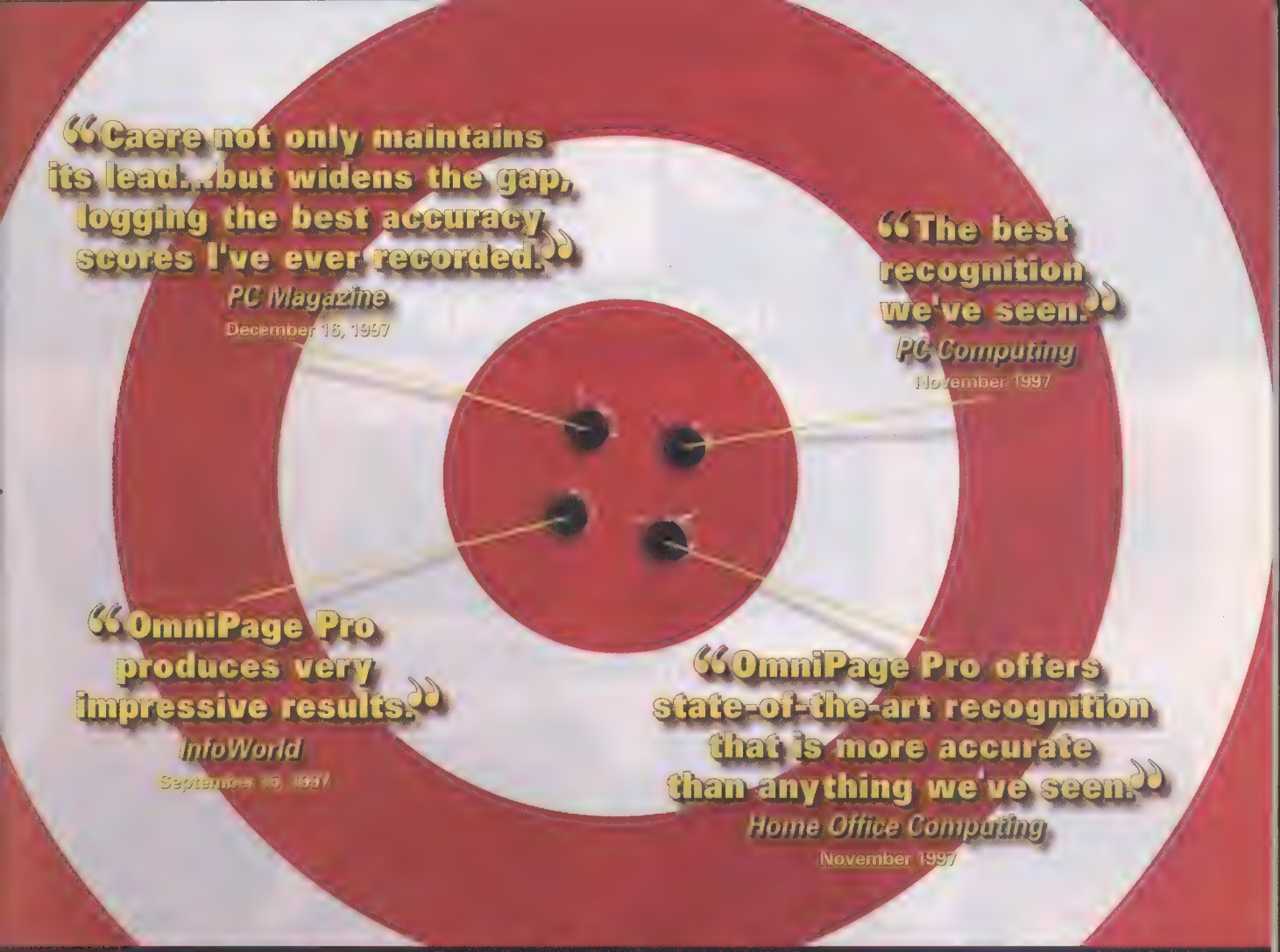


NOTE: WINSTONE 98 IS A SYSTEM-LEVEL, APPLICATIONS-BASED BENCHMARK THAT MEASURES A PC'S OVERALL PERFORMANCE WHEN RUNNING WINDOWS-BASED 32-BIT BUSINESS APPLICATIONS.

How to Get Ahead
The Presario 5600 Series packs in every Windows 98 feature imaginable. Its only drawback: Performance lagged behind a similarly equipped Dell Dimension running Windows 98.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARNOLD TIOSEJO



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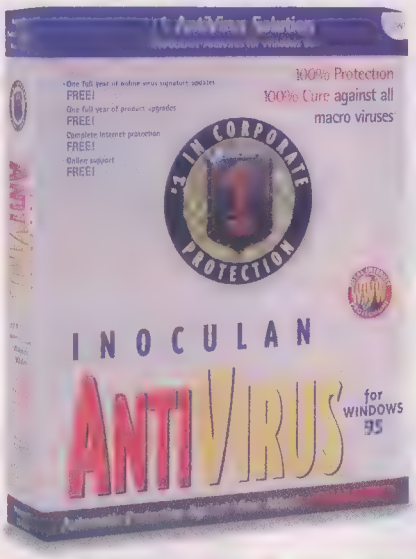

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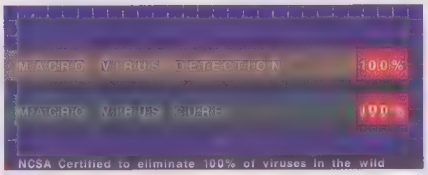

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Slow Start for Celeron

It's like getting brown socks for your birthday. Celeron, Intel's new low-cost CPU based on the Pentium II architecture, is massively underwhelming. But as your mother would say with a consoling smile, it will be oh-so-practical, dear.

Little Bang, Little Buck One look at MidWest Micro's NC-266C Basics—the first Celeron system to sneak into *PC Computing*'s Performance Labs—and you'd have to agree. It's one of the cheapest ways to put a Pentium II–class PC on your desk.

Consider what $999 buys you: 64MB of SDRAM, a 3.2GB hard drive, and S3's Virge AGP graphics card stocked with a generous 4MB of memory. You also get a 32-speed CD-ROM drive and a monitor (albeit a stingy 15-inch job). With the money you save, you'll want to treat yourself to a 17-inch screen.

Yes, the machine has *value* written all over it. But performance is another matter. Under Windows 95 application benchmarks, the NC-266C Basics chugged along at less than half the pace of an average 400MHz Pentium II—even though its clock speed runs at 266MHz. What's worse, most plain-Jane 266MHz Pentium boxes outperform it, yet they cost no more. In our tests the Basics even performed slower than a similarly configured 233MHz Pentium.

What explains this lack of giddyap? The Celeron chip has no L2 cache. This is why it's cheap: Intel yanked the expensive SRAM chips from the CPU so system makers could build "lite" Pentium II machines that shimmy under today's magical $1,000 threshold.

Otherwise, the Celeron bears more than a passing resemblance to a slimmed-down Slot 1 Pentium II. It comes with the multimedia-enhancing MMX instruction set. It supports AGP as well as 66MHz SDRAM chips. And it promises to run Windows NT as fast as or faster than a comparable Pentium CPU.

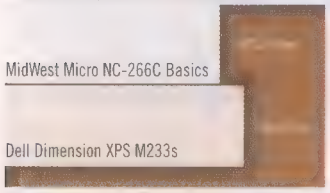
Having Fun Yet? Even if you want one, your choice in Celeron boxes may be limited. Thus far, system makers have been tepid about the chip. Its anemic performance has given many vendors pause. Worse, it uses Intel's 440EX AGP chip set, which means that motherboards designed for the Celeron can't be retrofitted with other CPUs. Should the market decide that the chip is a dog, many PC manufacturers may find themselves flea-bitten with inventory they can't move or upgrade.

Timing may also be a problem. AMD and Cyrix (now owned by National Semiconductor) have 300MHz CPUs coming to market. (In fact, Cyrix will be introducing chips that approach 400MHz speeds shortly.) These perform faster than the Celeron yet cost less. Neither manufacturer has thus far made much of a dent in Intel's market. But with the squeeze on technology budgets everywhere, the price/performance value of their offerings looks mighty appealing.

Meanwhile, MidWest Micro provides a pleasingly cheap solution for those who plan to upgrade to Windows NT. But if you're sticking with Windows 95/98 for the foreseeable future, you can get far better performance for the dollar elsewhere. MARTY JEROME

Real McCoy At the heart of Intel's Celeron CPU is the same Deschutes core in a Pentium II. MidWest Micro's NC-266C Basics showcases its dollar value.

Ready, Set . . . Hold On
Windows Application Performance



NOTE: WINSTONE 98 IS A SYSTEM-LEVEL, APPLICATIONS-BASED BENCHMARK THAT MEASURES A PC'S OVERALL PERFORMANCE WHEN RUNNING WINDOWS-BASED 32-BIT BUSINESS APPLICATIONS.

Pentium II Lite Intel's new Celeron chip is cheap, but a speed demon it's not. In our tests the 266MHz Celeron ran slower than a similarly equipped 233MHz Pentium.

FILEBOX

MidWest Micro NC-266C Basics

☆☆☆

Verdict: The cheapest way to put a Pentium II–class PC on your desk.

Pros: Seductive low cost.

Cons: Poky performance under Windows 95; motherboard not upgradable.

Features As Tested: 266MHz Celeron CPU, 64MB of SDRAM, 3.2GB hard drive, 32X CD-ROM drive, S3 Virge AGP graphics card with 4MB of memory, 15-inch monitor.

$999 est. street price
MidWest Micro
(800) 728-8582
Enter 683 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

RATINGS: ☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE

Pocket-size Color PCs

Sick of schlepping around an 8-pound notebook just to check your e-mail on the road? It's time to consider the color Windows CE 2.0 devices. NEC's MobilePro 750C and Sharp's Mobilon HC-4500 serve up brilliant color screens and deliver unique features that set them apart from other Windows CE 2.0 offerings.

Each unit ships with 16MB of RAM, a rechargeable battery, and an internal 33.6Kbps modem. You'll also find a QWERTY keyboard on each device, in addition to a stylus for easy navigation on your color screen.

Camera Ready The Sharp Mobilon HC-4500 is about the same size as other Windows CE 2.0 devices, measuring 7.3 by 3.7 by 1.2 inches and weighing just over a pound. Its keyboard features tiny chiclet-style keys, though they're spaced far enough apart that you can attempt some light typing (good luck). Seven quick-access buttons at the top of the screen give you one-touch access to your main CE applications.

The internal fax modem is easily accessible at the upper left-hand side of the keyboard.

Color in Hand NEC's MobilePro 750C (left) and Sharp's Mobilon HC-4500 are among the first full-featured Windows CE handheld PCs to offer color screens.

The Sharp Mobilon also has a voice recorder, but the quality is nothing compared with the impressive Psion Series 5's internal recorder (see "Powerful Pocket Pal," November 1997, page 150).

Most of the features on the Mobilon are run-of-the-mill, except for one option. If you're willing to part with $399 in addition to the Mobilon's $999 estimated retail price, you can get a tiny and impressive PC Card digital camera. This adds a mere 3 ounces to the Mobilon's weight. You can shoot up to 15 JPEG images at 640-by-480 resolution. The camera doesn't include a viewing area; rather you point the lens at your subject and then see the image on the Mobilon's screen. Unfortunately, the camera eats batteries like candy so you'll want to stay plugged in or carry plenty of extras.

Smile Plug in the Sharp Mobilon's optional digital camera and snap up to 15 photos at 640-by-480 resolution.

Tap, Tap, Tap NEC has enhanced the design of its original MobilePro 700, giving it a color screen and a slightly new design. But the internal software and applications of the MobilePro 750C remain the same as those of the MobilePro 700 (see "Put Windows in Your Pocket," January, page 79).

The color MobilePro 750C is a bit bigger and heavier than its predecessor. It comes in at 9.6 by 5.4 by 1.4 inches and weighs just under 2 pounds. Ugh. But for this size and weight you get something you don't find in any other CE device: a nearly usable keyboard. The keys on the MobilePro 750C are large enough to make touch typing almost a reality. (It will still take some patience and persistence to get used to the size, which isn't quite on par with a true notebook computer.) The screen is also large—a glorious 8 inches, which is plenty of room to navigate among your CE documents and Web pages.

But if we're going to lug around a portable device weighing nearly 2 pounds, we'd rather see a Pentium processor that runs Windows 95. For example, Toshiba's Libretto 100CT weighs just over 2 pounds and sports a 166MHz MMX Pentium processor, a 2GB hard drive, and Windows 95.

There's no doubt that color Windows CE 2.0 devices are sexy. One look at the screen and you'll be tempted. But they cost a pretty penny over the likes of a scaled-down handheld like the Palm III (see "The Pilot Flies Again," June, page 61). The Sharp Mobilon HC-4500 is more portable than the NEC MobilePro 750C and its camera is a neat gimmick. The MobilePro 750C's strength lies in its keyboard. But the unit is bulky and heavy, and you might be better off spending the extra cash on an ultralight notebook computer. **KYLA K. CARLSON**

FILEBOX

NEC MobilePro 750C

☆☆☆

Verdict: Nearly usable keyboard, but at this size we'd rather see Windows 95 and a Pentium.

Pros: Bright color screen; large keyboard; integrated modem.

Cons: Bulky and heavy.

$899 est. street price
NEC Computer Systems Division
(888) 863-2669
Enter 684 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

Sharp Mobilon HC-4500

☆☆☆

Verdict: All the advantages (and compromises) of a pocket-size color portable—with a cool camera option.

Pros: Color screen; optional $399 digital camera; integrated fax modem.

Cons: Costly; tiny keyboard; camera chows batteries.

$999 est. retail price
Sharp Electronics
(800) 237-4277
Enter 685 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

RATINGS: ☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE

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Now Showing in Your Living Room

Like you need another excuse to be a couch potato. With the $5,000 Philips Electronics DVX8000 Multimedia Home Theater and the $1,399 TigerDirect PC Cinema, at least you can claim to be doing work next time you settle onto the sofa in front of the TV. Search the Web, do your taxes, and edit presentations from your living room. These double-duty systems are home theater show-offs with built-in DVD and Dolby Digital Surround Sound decoding.

Lights, Computer, Action! For $5,000, Philips Electronics' Multimedia Home Theater includes everything but a big-screen TV.

Call Them Computers Both boxes could stand alone as midrange computer systems with their 233MHz processors, 32MB of RAM, and 3GB hard drives. Both run Windows 95. Like the Sony WebTV, each comes with a wireless keyboard and a remote control. The Multimedia Home Theater comes with an internal 33.6Kbps fax modem, while the PC Cinema includes a faster 56Kbps model.

Think of the Multimedia Home Theater as the computer for home theater fanatics. Its black case holds everything you need computerwise: two USB ports, a 233MHz MMX Pentium CPU, a standard floppy drive, a Trident 3-D graphics accelerator, and a 16-bit sound card. The DVD player, of course, also reads CD-ROMs. Unfortunately, the interface has some drawbacks. The various devices you hook up to the box, like a VCR or a digital satellite dish, show up only as little preview boxes on your Windows 95 desktop. The software interface for controlling the DVD player and other features forces you to use the kludgy scroll-down function on your keyboard's mouse or the remote control.

At the Movies The PC Cinema's interface is better, showing a bar with common remote-control functions at the bottom of the screen when viewing DVD movies. This interface is also easier to access than that of the Home Theater, and it lets you take better advantage of DVD pluses like switching subtitles and languages and jumping through scenes.

The PC Cinema includes a 233MHz MMX AMD-K6 CPU, a DVD–CD-ROM drive, a floppy drive, an ATI 3D Rage video card, and a Sound Blaster–compatible sound card. Setup was a snap, even if the documentation left something to be desired. Keep in mind the PC Cinema is not designed to be your home theater and home PC as the Multimedia Home Theater is. It's another component that connects to your existing home theater receiver.

TV or PC? Try Both TigerDirect's $1,399 PC Cinema puts a DVD PC in control of your home theater.

Fun Stuff Of the two, there's no question the Multimedia Home Theater is the machine you want. Not only is it a PC, it's also a TV tuner, a preamp, a stereo receiver, and a home theater–quality DVD player. It even has a front game port for a Nintendo machine.

We tested it in our home theater lab with several DVD movies and compared its picture with the output of the popular Pioneer DVL-700 home theater DVD player. Guess what? The picture was crisper on the Multimedia Home Theater. Sound quality was excellent—a built-in Dolby Digital decoder means you don't have to buy a separate unit to feel like you're in the middle of the tornado in *Twister*.

With the Philips DVX8000 Multimedia Home Theater, both computer users and home theater buffs will be happy. The TigerDirect PC Cinema puts a WebTV-like device, a home computer, and a DVD player in one unit. It doesn't offer all the extras of the Home Theater, but it lets you add these things later. LAURA LINDHE

FILEBOX

Philips DVX8000 Multimedia Home Theater

☆☆☆☆

Verdict: Everything you need to build a high-octane home theater system except the big-screen TV.

Pros: Good NTSC output; functions well as a home theater receiver and PC; well-placed ports; excellent remote control and wireless keyboard.

Cons: Expensive; limited interface integration between PC and home theater functions.

Features As Tested: 233MHz MMX Pentium CPU, 32MB of RAM, 3GB hard drive, DVD–CD-ROM drive, 33.6Kbps fax modem, Trident 3-D graphics accelerator, 16-bit sound card, wireless keyboard, remote control, TV tuner, preamp, stereo receiver.

$5,000 est. street price
Philips Electronics
(888) 486-6272, (650) 846-4300
Enter 686 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

PC Cinema

☆☆☆

Verdict: An inexpensive way to add a DVD PC to your home theater setup.

Pros: Thoughtful interface intelligently bridges home theater and PC functions; 56Kbps fax modem; a cinch to set up.

Cons: Almost unreadable computer output on TV; weak home theater DVD output; loud, distracting fan in the PC.

Features As Tested: 233MHz MMX AMD-K6 CPU, 32MB of RAM, 3GB hard drive, DVD–CD-ROM drive, 56Kbps fax modem, ATI 3D Rage video card, Sound Vision 32 Wave PnP sound card, wireless keyboard, remote control.

$1,399 est. street price
TigerDirect
(800) 830-0056, (305) 229-1119
Enter 687 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

RATINGS: ☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE

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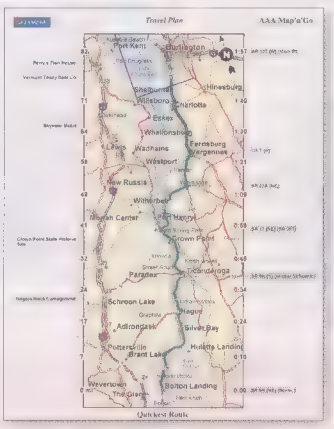

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Get Your Presentations Noticed

You don't have to spend extra time at the gym just to deliver an eye-catching presentation on the road. New ultralight presentation projectors from In Focus, NEC, and Proxima beam bright, high-res images from your notebook, yet have a traveling weight of less than 10 pounds. What's the magic? All three rely on Texas Instruments' newest Digital Light Processing (DLP) technology. While the first DLP projectors on the market weighed in at over 20 pounds and cost over $10,000, these new small wonders cost thousands less and still light up the boardroom.

No Nodding Off Lightweight Digital Light Processing (DLP) projectors from NEC, In Focus, and Proxima (left to right) are bright enough to let you show off your presentations to a conference room full of people.

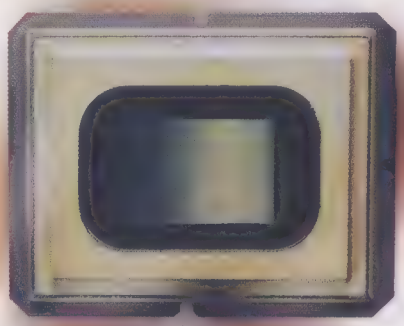
Light Bright The 6.8-pound In Focus LP420, with 500 ANSI lumens of power, does everything a projector should: It outputs standard television signals as well as your PC data at true SVGA resolution. The onboard controls and an optional remote make it easy. Like the other two projectors, the LP420 supports a maximum resolution of 800 by 600 pixels. The video output of the In Focus, however, is especially good; it could double as a home theater projector after hours. Best of all, the LP420 takes about three minutes to set up and is only a little fatter than your notebook. This small size compromises audio quality slightly, but the onboard speaker still does the trick.

Meanwhile, NEC's MultiSync LT80 and Proxima's UltraLight DS1 look like siblings. In fact, only their documentation and logos distinguish them from each other. At just under 10 pounds, these projectors are slightly heavier than the LP420, but both offer impressive performance.

These projectors show off your video presentations as well as your Microsoft PowerPoint slides, shining at an incredibly bright 600 ANSI lumens. A little extra poundage means a few extra features, like a remote control that acts as a mouse and a laser pointer.

Both the MultiSync and the UltraLight have 800-by-600 maximum resolution and a single onboard mono speaker—nothing to write home about. The onscreen controls on both require a little more navigation than you might want when you're pressed for time, but they get the job done.

One for the Road The boxy Proxima UltraLight DS1 and the NEC MultiSync LT80 are among the lightest and brightest projectors you'll find. But they're somewhat hefty, and the MultiSync costs over $1,500 more than the In Focus LP420 and the UltraLight. If you need the lightest projector you can find at a premium price, go for the In Focus. But if you need a slightly brighter picture and don't mind a bit more weight, the NEC and Proxima units won't leave you in the dark. LAURA LINDHE



Mirror, Mirror All the projectors have Texas Instruments' compact DLP chip, which houses thousands of microscopic reflective mirrors. The result is a uniformly bright high-res image.

FILEBOX

In Focus LP420

☆☆☆☆☆

Verdict: Deliver stunning presentations even with the lights on.

Pros: Light and compact; truly portable; sets up easily in minutes; good price.

Cons: Remote control not included; one speaker.

$5,999 list price
In Focus
(800) 294-6400, (503) 685-8888
Enter 688 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

NEC MultiSync LT80

☆☆☆☆

Verdict: Will make your audience sit up and listen—but it's not the lightest or cheapest.

Pros: Smart remote control that's a mouse and a laser pointer in one; 600 ANSI lumens let you spotlight your presentation even under full fluorescents.

Cons: Relatively bulky and heavy; tricky onscreen controls.

$7,695 est. street price
NEC Technologies
(800) 632-4636, (630) 467-5000
Enter 689 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

Proxima UltraLight DS1

☆☆☆☆

Verdict: Puts your presentation in its best light—if you don't mind the extra heft.

Pros: Lots of extras; remote control doubles as a mouse and a laser pointer; good price.

Cons: Boxy design; nearly 10 pounds.

$5,500 est. street price
Proxima Corp.
(800) 447-7692, (619) 457-5500
Enter 690 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

RATINGS: ☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE

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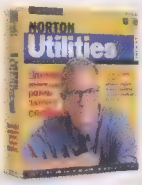

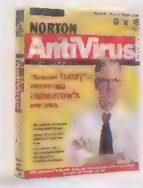

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Infolink 166 at: www.pccomputing.com/infolink

Live Large—For Less

Don't shortchange your eyes with a small screen. With new 21-inch monitors from Sony, Samsung, and ViewSonic there's no reason to—the big picture now comes cheap. Each of these professional-quality screens costs less than $1,500. With all the buzz about flat-panel monitors, it's easy to forget that big, beautiful CRT displays are more affordable than ever. And their vast screens and high resolutions are worth every penny.

Of course, a 21-inch monitor has other costs too. You need a desk big enough to hold one, not to mention strong enough to withstand the weight. But if you have room in your office and some cash to spare, go ahead. Spoil yourself with a big screen.

Spoil Yourself You can afford to with new 21-inch monitors like ViewSonic's PT813, Samsung's SyncMaster 1000p, and Sony's Multiscan GDM-500PS (left to right). All offer excellent image quality for less than $1,500.

Eye-catching Watch out, or you'll get lost in Sony's Multiscan GDM-500PS. This beautiful Trinitron screen has both deep color and sharp text, thanks to a flat CRT design and a superfine aperture grille. The Multiscan has a smooth, flicker-free display even at its top resolution of 1,600 by 1,200. Its 19.8-inch viewing area is big and bright enough for everything from documents to designs to games, and best of all, it's pancake flat.

The Sony Multiscan is a bit boxier than the other two monitors we looked at, but there are design advantages. Though the Multiscan is a 21-inch monitor, its compact cabinet makes it much more manageable on your desktop. Best of all, this monitor comes in at just $1,499.

ViewSonic's PT813 is the biggest display of the bunch, with a full 20-inch viewing area. Unfortunately, the big screen makes for a big box—the ViewSonic was the deepest monitor we looked at, barely fitting on our lab shelf. If you're strapped for space even a little, you may want to go with a more compact model.

But for those with the room, the ViewSonic won't disappoint. Its large screen shows off great color, though text comes off slightly fuzzy. We loved the controls, which were easy to navigate. The ViewSonic doesn't do as well as the Sony Multiscan at 1,600-by-1,200 resolution and has a slight visible flicker, but it's workable, not to mention a bit more affordable at $1,449. If you're working with text you'll want something sharper, but for dedicated graphics this is a good-looking screen.

Space Age Samsung's SyncMaster 1000p is as pleasing to look at as the pictures it displays. Its rounded design looks slick on any desk, although it's heavy and slightly deep. And the screen's pronounced curve makes it look positively rotund next to the flat visages of the Sony and ViewSonic monitors.

But onscreen the SyncMaster 1000p strikes a good middle ground in this group. Its text and color can't compete with those of the Sony Multiscan, but they're still acceptable. We liked the one-button controls, but they may be an acquired taste for most users. The SyncMaster 1000p is competitively priced at $1,249, but for just a little more you can get Sony's stunning Multiscan GDM-500PS.

Bottom line: Any of these monitors does an excellent job with today's advanced computer graphics. Sure, flat-panel LCDs are sexier, but probably not worth the huge dent they'll make in your budget. Whichever 21-incher from this group you choose, you won't regret it. ViewSonic's PT813 offers the most screen for your money, and Samsung's SyncMaster 1000p is a stylish choice. But if you must have the top-notch professional display, Sony's Multiscan GDM-500PS is the one to watch. JULIE POLITO

FILEBOX

Sony Multiscan GDM-500PS

☆☆☆☆☆

Verdict: Windows never looked so good.

Pros: Beautiful picture all around; great price; compact design.

Cons: What cons?

Features As Tested: 19.8-inch viewing area, 1,600-by-1,200 maximum resolution at 85Hz.

$1,499 est. street price
Sony Electronics
(800) 352-7669
Enter 691 at
www.pccomputing.com/infolink

Samsung SyncMaster 1000p

☆☆☆☆

Verdict: A 21-inch monitor that won't disappoint. Looks sharp on your desk too.

Pros: Slick design; sharp text; crisp, bright colors.

Cons: Bulky; curved screen.

Features As Tested: 19.7-inch viewing area, 1,600-by-1,200 maximum resolution at 85Hz.

$1,249 est. street price
Samsung Electronics America
(800) 933-4110
Enter 692 at
www.pccomputing.com/infolink

ViewSonic PT813

☆☆☆☆

Verdict: A first-class 21-inch display at a coach-class price.

Pros: Big screen area; good controls; deep color.

Cons: Not the sharpest text.

Features As Tested: 20-inch viewing area, 1,600-by-1,200 maximum resolution at 85Hz.

$1,449 est. street price
ViewSonic Corp.
(800) 888-8583
Enter 693 at
www.pccomputing.com/infolink

RATINGS: ☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE

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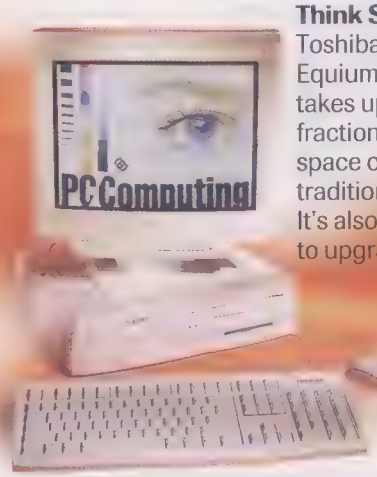
Cube Art

Ever get the feeling your office is getting smaller? You're not alone. To save on space, consider Toshiba's Equium 7000S PC. A full-featured desktop system, this svelte box takes up a fraction of the space a typical desktop machine does. Your IS department will love it too: It's a cinch to upgrade.

The Equium's compact 15-by-16-inch footprint is ideal for cramped work environments. You can even hang the Equium on the wall using its built-in keyholes.



Think Small Toshiba's Equium 7000S takes up a fraction of the space of a traditional PC. It's also a snap to upgrade.

Toshiba offers six different configurations around 233MHz, 266MHz, or 300MHz Pentium II processors. Prices start at about $1,400 for a 233MHz model with 32MB of SDRAM and a 2GB hard drive. The monitor is extra, but Intel's 440LX AGP chip set does offer a fast, local-bus pipe between memory and the ATI 3D Rage Pro AGP graphics adapter.

Space is limited, but not flexibility. After a floppy drive and a 24-speed CD-ROM, you're left with two extra slots. But the instant-access side panel lets you add memory, add-in cards—even swap the motherboard—in 60 seconds or less.

A 10/100Base-TX network interface and Intel's LANDesk Client Manager 3.1 provide local and remote asset management and analysis for networked Equiums. That info and Toshiba's Expert Intelligent Help software help cube dwellers diagnose some of their own problems.

Designed to reduce total cost of ownership, a floppyless Equium could fit the bill as a thin corporate client—although its price tag is a tad high when compared with other boxes in that class. MIKE HOGAN

FILEBOX

Toshiba Equium 7000S

☆☆☆

Verdict: A full-featured desktop system for tight spaces.

Pros: Compact; versatile design; can mount PC on a wall; six available configurations.

Cons: A fairly tall price tag for a fairly small PC; not available with the latest processors.

$1,427 est. street price
Toshiba America Information Systems
(888) 598-7802
Enter 694 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

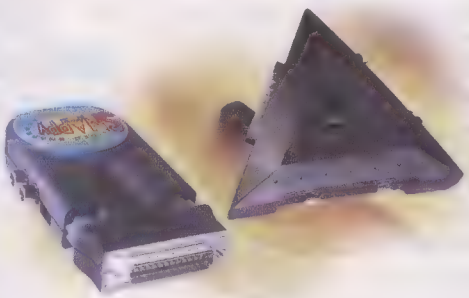
Connectix QuickClip vs. Play Snappy Video Snapshot 3.0 Deluxe

Give Your Movies Direction

You've got a camcorder and a PC. But how do you get them to talk to each other? With a video capture device like Connectix's $99 QuickClip or Play's $140 Snappy Video Snapshot 3.0 Deluxe, of course. Both products plug into your PC's parallel port and let you create digital images and AVI video clips from your camcorder, VCR, or NTSC camera.

The less expensive QuickClip includes a USB port or a parallel pass-through port, which is convenient if you're already using a printer or other parallel device; with the Snappy, you have to purchase a parallel switch box.

For $40 more, the Snappy Video Snapshot matches some of the QuickClip's features and includes a better software bundle—Adobe PhotoDeluxe 2.0, MetaCreations Kai's PowerGoo SE, and Gryphon Morph 2.5. The Snappy also works with both Windows 95 and Windows NT 4.0.



Director's Cut Grab video onto your PC with Play's $140 Snappy 3.0 Deluxe (left) and Connectix's $99 QuickClip.

For capturing still images on your PC from video, the QuickClip is a low-cost solution for anyone who has a Windows 95 machine with USB ports and doesn't need much in the way of software. But for great image-editing software and Windows 95 and NT support, the Snappy 3.0 Deluxe is worth the parallel-port shuffle. RICH SCHWERIN

FILEBOX

QuickClip

☆☆☆☆

Verdict: Low-cost video capture device with USB support.

$99 est. street price
Connectix Corp.
(800) 950-5880, (650) 571-5100
Enter 695 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

Snappy Video Snapshot 3.0 Deluxe

☆☆☆☆

Verdict: Great image-editing bundle with Win95/NT support.

$140 est. street price
Play; (800) 306-7529
Enter 696 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

RATINGS: ☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE

NEC

Expect More. Experience More.

NEC Technologies

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NEC Technologies:

Expect more. Experience more.

How often do you casually click through a long series of vivid, finely-detailed World Wide Web pages? Or send gloriously-hued, high-quality images to the printer in your office? Do your salespeople clamor for projectors small enough to fit in a briefcase but with viewing ranges that meet the needs of even the largest boardrooms?

It's tough to remember that just a few years ago these kinds of capabilities were, well, pipedreams. But all that has changed, and with a new generation of desktop and briefcase peripherals has come a dramatic transformation in how we do business.

Corporations are discovering the real competitive advantages to be harvested with tools that radically improve the look and delivery of the information on which the bottom line depends. For instance,

- Larger screens mean you can spend less time navigating complex spreadsheets and more time evaluating their contents.
- Using today's wide range of printers, you can internally create compelling documents, produce brochures, mass mailings and even books, thereby cutting operating costs and tightening turnaround.
- Multimedia projectors allow you to quickly customize a sales presentation during lunchtime and have it ready for display by 1 p.m.

No wonder choosing the proper peripherals has become one of the keys to long-term corporate success.

Expect more . . .

At NEC Technologies, we provide the means of access to digital information and all it represents. Our imaging solutions — monitors, projectors and printers — afford an experience that's far more enriching and rewarding than any of our competitors.

That's because at NEC Technologies, we match your dreams with innovative, enabling technologies. Information systems have become engines of fulfillment, drawing people together, offering not only business advantages but also entertainment. We know you use information systems to build careers, business, the future. So we build high quality and advanced performance into every NEC Technologies product.

NEC Technologies is an independent company focused on building, delivering and supporting the very best imaging solutions.

We're part of NEC Corporation — recognized as a world leader in high technology. With more than $45 billion in annual revenues, NEC

is one of the world's largest organizations. NEC invests heavily in innovation, consistently ranking among the top five companies worldwide in the number of patents issued. NEC Technologies — and every one of our customers — benefits enormously from the investment NEC commits every year to research and development.

. . . Experience more

To produce a full spectrum of reliable, high-quality peripherals, NEC Technologies has created three product divisions focused on designing advanced, premium value peripherals for a wide variety of imaging solutions:

- **Personal Display Division.** The hallmark of NEC Technologies for over 12 years, the Personal Display Division has established a reputation for numerous product and technology firsts, including the first multi-frequency desktop monitor (1985), the first flat-square technology CRT (1991) and the largest desktop LCD monitor (1997).

As you might expect, such technological leadership has generated market leadership as well. In 1996, the Personal Display Division's multimedia monitors ranked number one. And the Division's MultiSync® monitor product families — Advanced, Enterprise and Professional — all claimed a dominant share of their market sectors.

Each of these families is built for specific kinds of environments and applications and incorporates the best in advanced display technology. CromaClear technology, for instance, produces the only CRT combining the fine detail of shadow mask technology with the aperture grille's brightness, contrast and color, so you get highly defined images. And XtraView™ technology for LCD displays delivers the industry's widest viewing angle — a full 160 degrees both up/down and left/right. The result: brighter, sharper, more accurate images regardless of the screen type you prefer.

MultiSync monitors enable you to work longer and more comfortably. All MultiSync monitors feature NEC Technologies' Intelligent Power Manager system, are EPA Energy Star-compliant and include user-friendly on-screen controls.

Working with several other NEC subsidiaries rather than OEM suppliers has allowed NEC Technologies' Personal Display Division much more flexibility in product design, which has paid off with the revolutionary second generation of MultiSync LCD monitors introduced in March 1998.

- **Visual Systems Division.** A leader in matching business needs with innovative technologies and dynamic products that deliver, manage and store multimedia information, NEC Technologies' Visual Systems Division designs and builds presentation products used in a variety of applications, from conference rooms and training facilities to tradeshow displays, videoconferencing and classrooms.

In just a single year, this Division's products have claimed 10 percent of the fast-growing LCD projector market. Visual System Division products also have led the CRT projection market for over five years. And *AV/Video & Multimedia Producer* magazine has bestowed its coveted Platinum Award on the Division's MultiSync XM Series multimedia presentation monitors.

The fast pace of technological innovation continues at the Visual Systems Division, too, with plasma displays and high light-output DLP projection systems.

- **Imaging Division.** NEC Technologies' Imaging Division has established NEC Technologies as a leading supplier of high-quality printing and imaging solutions for the home and business environment. NEC Technologies' Imaging Division has emerged as one of the leading suppliers of monochrome laser printer products. The addition of an inkjet product line further enhanced NEC Technologies' position as supplier of a full line of industry-leading printer products.

The award-winning SuperScript 860 propelled NEC Technologies to the number two spot in the sub-$500 laser printer category, reaching an overall 13 percent market share. Last year's successful SuperScript 1260 and 1260N introduction marked the Imaging Division's re-entry into the imaging products business arena. Since that time, the SuperScript 1260 and 1260N have received numerous industry awards such as *PC Computing*'s MVP Finalist and *Home Office Computing*'s Editors' Pick and Best Buy.

The innovative printing architecture, faster printing speeds and user-friendly on-screen printer status has made the SuperScript family of products some of the most efficient and cost-effective printers available.

- **Automated Fingerprint Identification System Division.** NEC Technologies develops revolutionary fingerprint systems for law enforcement and other specialty customers. Based on an open systems environment, the NEC AFIS21™ offers quick, responsive results for fingerprint searching and matching.

Each of NEC Technologies' divisions fields products that incorporate leading-edge NEC technology boosting quality and performance while keeping ownership costs in line via low prices, product power-saving features and the best customer support available anywhere.

Seeing is Believing

The first time you buy a computer, you're thinking about getting the hottest system you can: the fastest processor, the quickest modem, the fastest CD-ROM drive, as much internal and hard disk storage as possible. But what about the display?

Experienced users know that the monitor bundled with a PC isn't always the best choice, since the vendor's focus is on lowering prices, not offering the best value. Despite decent baseline features and acceptable performance, the smaller screens and limited resolutions on many standard-configuration monitors make it tough to work with several programs simultaneously, scroll through graphics-packed Web pages or edit scanned photos. A mediocre monitor makes even a sizzling system fizzle.

Yes, I'd switch to a 14-inch LCD monitor . . .

When it costs twice as much as a 15-inch CRT monitor	30%
When it costs 50% more than a 15-inch CRT monitor	48%
When it costs 25% more than a 15-inch CRT monitor	60%

Source: Stanford Resources Inc., 1996

In many cases, you're better off paying a little more for a higher-quality monitor that makes using your computer easier and more efficient.

Happily, today NEC Technologies offers you more monitor options than ever: new sizes and display types, improved display technology and extremely competitive prices.

NEC Technologies monitors are designed for ease-of-use, power-savings and quality — and they work with all personal computers, regardless of brand, so you can "unbundle" any standard PC package and get the monitor you deserve.

LCD breakthroughs

With the addition of two 15.0-inch monitors, the MultiSync LCD1510V and the MultiSync LCD1510, as well as a redesigned 20.1-inch monitor, the MultiSync LCD2010, NEC Technologies now carries the most extensive LCD monitor lineup available.

Of course, you have come to expect bright, vivid images from MultiSync monitors, and the MultiSync LCD Series continues this esteemed tradition.

Because these monitors carry an analog signal throughout, no image degradation occurs because of analog-to-digital conversion. Color is displayed as a continuous spectrum. Comparatively, digital panels employ dithering — a type of eye illusion — to achieve different colors; however, no such illusion is necessary with the MultiSync LCD Series, which includes the world's largest LCD monitor, the MultiSync LCD2010. Users expect more from MultiSync monitors: with the MultiSync LCD Series, end-users will experience more, with the same degree of seamless, out-of-the-box integration and compatibility of previous CRT displays.

The three new MultiSync LCD Series monitors have been completely revised to incorporate several key new features made possible through partnerships with industry leaders.

Pivot capability allows you to view your screen in portrait (vertical alignment) and landscape (horizontal or traditional alignment) modes; it's the result of NEC Technologies teamwork with Portrait Displays, Inc. (PDI). You can alternate between the two views with one simple, fluid motion of the monitor, while the included Pivot® driver software from PDI and a single user-defined keystroke toggles the screen image between portrait and landscape views.

NEC Technologies' partnership with MicroTouch will soon deliver touch-screen input, expanding monitor functionality. For additional durability in demanding work environments, NEC Technologies-installed protective glass, called OptiShield™, will soon be available as an option for some LCD monitors. And NEC Technologies has teamed with Kensington to incorporate the universal security slot (seen for many years in notebook computers) to guard these new monitors against theft.

OSM™ on-screen controls make it easy to quickly refine your screen image for perfect centering, and adjust brightness and contrast. OSM also provides access to NEC Technologies' AccuColor® control system, an exclusive technology that helps you better match on-screen color to printed output, color standards or personal preferences. Another clever feature automatically rotates OSM to match the display's orientation.

The MultiSync LCD Series also offers flexible mounting choices for both portrait and landscape modes and follows the recently adopted VESA industry standard for arm or wall mounting. A newly designed cable management feature allows the monitors to be mounted flush against a wall or on an articulating arm. Finally, mounting holes on all four sides of MultiSync LCD Series monitors enable you to attach third-party devices such as speakers, video cameras or microphones, as they become available.

All MultiSync LCD Series monitors exceed Energy Star and

NUTEK requirements for reduced power consumption, thus reducing electric and cooling costs, and their minimal emissions make them a perfect choice for sensitive environments, such as those in medicine and science.

Continuing to set the standard for quality and reliability, these monitors are covered by an industry-leading three-year limited warranty on parts and labor, and a one-year backlight warranty.

MultiSync LCD Series flat-panel monitors are ideal for tight spaces, such as trading floors or emergency rooms, or any other setting in which space is a limited but valued resource.

MultiSync LCD2010

The MultiSync LCD2010. For the first time, a full 20.1 inches of display area are viewable in portrait or landscape mode. When rotating the monitor from a portrait to landscape mode, NEC Technologies' acclaimed XtraView technology provides a dramatic advantage. XtraView technology, an exclusive NEC Technologies innovation, delivers a full 160-degree viewing angle — providing the same bright, color-correct image from virtually *any* vantage point.

Given the limitations of other manufacturers' conventional LCD monitor viewing angles — some as low as 10 degrees up and down — the ability to enjoy greatly expanded viewing angles results in an unquestionable advantage, especially with a Pivot Enabled monitor

MultiSync LCD1510

for which up/down viewing becomes left/right viewing in portrait mode.

The MultiSync LCD1510 and the MultiSync LCD1510V. Delivering most of the same innovative features as their larger counterpart, the MultiSync LCD1510 and MultiSync LCD1510V offer an optimal resolution of 1024x768.

The MultiSync LCD1510 delivers the advantage of XtraView wide-angle viewing technology. The MultiSync LCD1510V, meanwhile, affords a value-oriented option for those interested in the MultiSync LCD Series' many attributes but who do not require an expanded viewing angle for multiple-user environments.

MultiSync E900

Nineteen inches for the Enterprise

The MultiSync E900. NEC Technologies' first 19-inch (18.0-inch viewable image size) monitor overcomes the budget and space constraints that have kept large-screen displays out of reach for many. The MultiSync E900 monitor, which supplies 83 percent of the viewing area of most 21-inch monitors, provides exceptional image quality, high resolutions and refresh rates — all at an aggressive estimated street price of $899. Compared to competitors' 19-inch monitors, the MultiSync E900 represents a smart investment.

The MultiSync E900 monitor is the latest addition to the Enterprise Series

NEC Technologies' LCDs improve the view in medicine

Dr. Linda Heffner at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston delivers more than 700 babies each year, many of them after high-risk pregnancies. So Heffner and her colleagues use ultrasound systems to track each child's development. Because they need a clear, crisp picture of the child's anatomy, they rely on NEC Technologies' MultiSync LCD monitors, which deliver sharp, detailed images but are small enough to be placed on diagnostic carts and in examination rooms.

At the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center in New York, Dr. David Ho has developed an innovative treatment for the deadly disease, thanks in part to an NEC Technologies MultiSync LCD2000. When he examined the LCD2000 monitor's detailed images of the virus, he noticed that it was more active than other imaging had suggested. So he formulated an aggressive new approach to fighting the virus and now administers a powerful mix of protease inhibitors with traditional antiviral drugs early in treatment. One day, he hopes to find a cure.

For Liska and Associates, MultiSync LCD2000 is the perfect design

Recognized internationally for design excellence, Chicago-based Liska and Associates, Inc. is an established leader in communication design. Founded in 1980, the company operates on the principle that good design promotes the positive personal and business relationships integral to corporate success.

So how does Liska and Associates keep its edge in the intensely competitive world of communication design? According to Kim Fry, a Liska and Associates project manager, the company relies on the talents of its top-notch creative team and best-of-breed technology from companies like NEC Technologies.

Screen technology critical for design success

"Technology drives most businesses today, ours included," declares Fry. "We benefit from any investment we make in hardware and software, and so do our clients. The better the working environment for our creative people, the better the product we deliver to clients."

One of the most important tools for today's designers, says Fry, is the computer screen — the landscape where designers make magic happen. Until recently, CRT screens dominated the working landscape at Liska. But, she says, that all changed last year when the company replaced its old CRTs with new NEC Technologies MultiSync LCD2000 monitors. There were a number of reasons for the change. Chief among them, reports Fry, is NEC's XtraView technology.

NEC MultiSync LCD monitors give the XtraView

"The XtraView technology is a huge advantage," she says. "Our people collaborate on many elements of a design project. Before we installed the MultiSync LCD2000 monitors, only one person — the individual positioned directly at the front of the screen — could actually see exactly what was on the screen. Now, thanks to XtraView, the screen can be seen at any angle — no more twisting and turning the monitor around, no more having to jump up to get a look at the screen. The viewing angle of the MultiSync LCD2000 is simply superior. Even if you're sitting to one side of the monitor or the other, you still get a full picture, no more ghosts. And the added flexibility means our designers can position the monitor to whatever angle is most comfortable for them to work."

What's more, notes Fry, the picture goes edge to edge.

"Before we installed the MultiSync LCD2000, we were never able to see the documents or images we were producing in the size we wanted. With CRTs, you'd often get blurring around the edges of the screen, and the colors were not nearly as bright as the MultiSync LCD2000 offers. You couldn't really get an accurate picture with CRTs, which can be very irritating. And, you might also have problems with hotspots and curvature. That's the beauty of the NEC MultiSync LCD2000, the color and the pictures are much more even — a uniform picture all the way across the face of the screen," she adds.

When color is critical and space is a premium

"Another outstanding feature of the MultiSync LCD2000 is the color clarity," she continues. "As you can imagine, color is absolutely vital in our business. We work on a lot of documents that are color-critical — brochures, annual reports, websites, etc. The MultiSync LCD2000 delivers an exceptionally bright, sharp picture; it's perfect for the type of imagery we produce: big, bold and bright."

And for growing firms like Liska and Associates, flat-panel monitors help improve the use of expensive floor space. "Over the past few years, our success has required us to add additional personnel," says Fry. "Unfortunately, CRT monitors just take up a lot of space. What's great about NEC's LCD monitors is that they're so slim, they've actually saved us desk space at a critical time of growth in the company."

Installation, she adds, was a snap. "They were extremely easy to install," she recalls. "We just took them out of the box, plugged them in and went back to work. The NEC MultiSync LCD2000 is a very good value. Most importantly, the people using the monitors at Liska and Associates are extremely happy."

of monitors from NEC Technologies, designed with corporate, small office and performance-driven home users in mind. Since such environments tend to run more sophisticated applications, the MultiSync E900 monitor reaches a maximum resolution of 1600x1200 at 73Hz.

In addition, the MultiSync E900 monitor is Plug-and-Play-compliant, features NEC Technologies' OSM controls and is EPA Energy Star- and NUTEK-compliant. It features a Microfilter™ CRT, a revolutionary new technology combining shadow and mask filter technology that renders superior image quality, including greater contrast, high brightness and incredible color purity.

Information in the Best Light

While PCs are terrific for creating presentations and delivering them one-on-one, few of us conduct business in such an isolated way. Regularly, we gather in groups to discuss corporate plans, strategies or performance. We listen to trainers, to sales pitches — and, often enough, we deliver presentations, too.

PC applications, such as Microsoft®'s PowerPoint®, make it easy to quickly create slick presentations. Too often, though, we overlook an essential part of our presentation: the tool we use to display it. Clearly, systems that support larger screens are required to adequately project important information and ideas to groups.

NEC Technologies offers the industry's broadest line of devices for displaying complex graphic information. Our MultiSync multimedia presentation monitors, CRT projectors, LCD projectors and plasma displays support a wide range of applications and uses.

MultiSync LT80

The MultiSync LT80™. One of the world's lightest and brightest ultra-portable SVGA projectors, the MultiSync LT80 projector offers extremely bright images of 600 ANSI lumens in a package weighing in at less than 10 pounds.

The MultiSync LT80 employs Digital Light Processing™ (DLP™) single-chip display technology for a product that is extremely lightweight while delivering excellent image quality and the features demanded by today's road warrior — including a full-featured wireless remote control with built-in laser pointer, height adjustment and zoom control.

The MultiSync LT80 also comes with InstaCare℠, the industry's most aggressive service program. InstaCare assures overnight replacement or 72-hour repair and return service in the event of malfunction — whether you're on the road or down the hall — and NEC Technologies pays for overnight delivery in both the U.S. and Canada.

The MultiSync LT80 uses NEC Technologies' proprietary AccuBlend™ intelligent pixel blending technology to ensure compatibility with 640x480 (VGA), 832x624 (Mac), 1,024x768 (XGA) and 1,152x870 (Mac). Thanks to AccuBlend, the projector can use a complex mathematical algorithm to display compressed resolutions, resulting in an excellent image that offers remarkably true resolution at low cost.

For international travelers, the MultiSync LT80 projector comes with a universal power supply and accepts NTSC, NTSC 4.43, PAL and SECAM signals. The LT80's 270-watt metal halide lamp boasts a half-life of 1,000 hours and offers 24-bit color reproduction for 16.7 million colors.

For all its power, the MultiSync LT80 is extremely compact, making it ideal for carrying on airplanes. It measures just 9.25(W) x 12.2(D) x 4.8(H) inches and weighs only 9.9 pounds. An in-box training video is included to aid end-user training and a quick-start guide makes set-up easy. With its built-in audio capabilities, the MultiSync LT80 is an ideal presentation solution for DVD players, VCRs and virtually any other video source.

The MultiSync XV29™ Plus. Have you been looking for a high-quality presentation display that won't decimate your budget? NEC Technologies' new MultiSync XV29 Plus multimedia presentation monitor is probably the solution.

Ideal for videoconferencing applications, corporate boardrooms, tradeshows and public kiosks, as well as K-12 and higher education environments, the MultiSync XV29 Plus monitor utilizes a flat-square technology CRT to furnish superior display performance and images that deliver maximum contrast, sharpness and color saturation. The screen surface also has an anti-static/anti-glare treatment, standard on all MultiSync multimedia presentation monitors.

Making the world safe for the rest of us — with MultiSync monitors

Detective Inspector Kim Rossmo of the Vancouver Police Department determined that there was a method to the madness of serial killers. This insightful police officer developed a software program, Orion, that helps police track serial killers. The application evaluates a million calculations and then produces a geographic profile of the perpetrator's likely home address or place of employment.

Orion, however, is only useful if as many police departments as possible know about it and use it. That's why the inspector chose to demonstrate the Orion's capabilities on the NEC Technologies MultiSync XM and XP multimedia displays, which have been used to show the software to such leading law enforcement agencies as Scotland Yard, the Royal Mounted Police and the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit.

NEC Technologies displays help Nasdaq track stock market

How does The Nasdaq Stock Market Inc.'s management keep track of an ever-changing global financial landscape? One way is with a brand new, state-of-the art control room.

The Nasdaq Stock Market, a subsidiary of the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. (NASD) based in Washington, DC, operates the largest electronic, screen-based stock market in the world, capable of handling transactions in excess of one billion shares each day.

Until recently, however, The Nasdaq Stock Market lacked a high-powered command center — a place where management could sift through the mountains of data pouring in from wire services, stock tickers and news feeds while simultaneously monitoring the day's financial activities on a wall of television screens and computer monitors. That all changed when Nasdaq's executive vice president, Pat Campbell, came aboard. Shortly after arriving at the company, Campbell initiated the building of the firm's computerized battle-room.

The first step in building the command center was to allocate one of the company's conferences rooms to the effort. Because Nasdaq wanted to encourage staff to utilize the room as both an information resource as well as a place to swap information and insights, a space measuring 20x20 feet and able to accommodate up to a dozen employees comfortably was selected. In addition, the location would also support other applications, such as video conferencing.

Once the physical dimensions of the space were settled, Nasdaq turned its attention to the selection of terminals and monitors to display information. For this all-important function, the company selected NEC Technologies' MultiSync 37-inch monitors. According to Adena Friedman of Nasdaq, NEC Technologies' products were chosen because of their high reliability and low price.

The NEC Technologies monitors display information from Bloomberg and ADP data feeds channeled from the firm's network control center in Trumball, Conn., which provides updates on stock market activity. The smaller terminals support an internally developed trading system.

The company completed building the room at the end of 1997 and today, says Friedman, "If an employee wants to use the room, he needs to book it well in advance."

MultiSync XV29 Plus

The MultiSync XV29 Plus simultaneously accepts two data and two video sources, each with accompanying audio. A wireless remote control allows you to control monitor functions from anywhere in the room. Switching between a computer and video source is as easy as a touch of a button. It's also easy to fine-tune image and audio output with a series of front-bezel adjustments and accompanying on-screen menus.

With vertical frequencies between 55-90 Hz, horizontal frequencies of 15, 31-50 kHz and RGB signal compatibility of 640x480 and 800x600 (SVGA) and 1,024x768, the MultiSync XV29 Plus is extremely price-competitive. It features a 0.74mm dot pitch CRT and accepts signals from a variety of sources, including data (PC and Macintosh) and video (composite video, S-Video, NTSC, PAL and SECAM). And its two front-firing speakers make it especially well-suited for videoconferencing and other applications with audio requirements.

The PlasmaSync™ 4200W. First of a new generation of large-screen displays, NEC Technologies' PlasmaSync 4200W will revolutionize the way you present and view information.

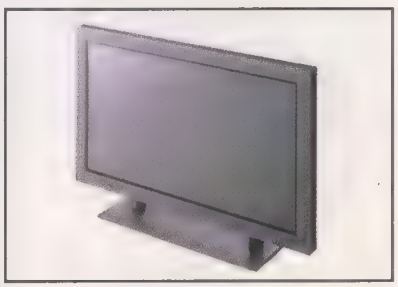
Thanks to NEC Technologies' leading-edge gas plasma technology, the PlasmaSync 4200W offers a flat 42-inch screen, delivering seamless multimedia capabilities in an impressively thin 3.5-inch depth.

Featuring a 16:9 wide aspect ratio, 16 million colors and a 853 x 480 native pixel resolution, the PlasmaSync 4200W produces bright, high-contrast images that are distortion-free and viewable through a full 160-degree conical viewing angle.

Compatible with current computer and video signal formats — including 640x480, 800x600, 832x624, NTSC, S-Video and DVD — the PlasmaSync 4200W is ready to display the coming generation of high-definition video and wide-screen computer graphics standards. Built-in scaling capabilities adapt the screen to display images in standard 4:3 or one of a variety of wide-screen modes.

The PlasmaSync 4200W display's image quality is augmented by NEC's unique Capsulated Color Filter technology. This embedded color filter enhances contrast and purifies the color spectrum emitted by the panel's red, green and blue phosphors.

In addition to its on-screen menu system, the PlasmaSync 4200W comes with an LCD touch panel remote control that allows you to easily make screen adjustments. It also includes a learning mode for seamless control of up to five input sources.



PlasmaSync 4200W

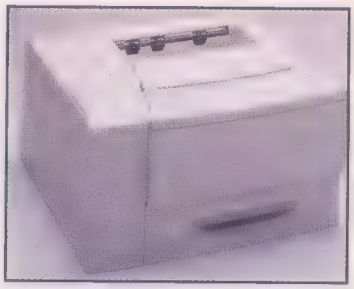
Ready for a Brave New World

Just as supermarket clerks perform data entry every time they scan a quart of milk, office printers are taking on new tasks, too, as information — rather than paper — is distributed over networks, then printed at its destination.

This new printing paradigm, spawned by the Internet, electronic mail and adoption of common file formats, means office printers need to be faster even as they turn out higher-quality documents. They must be smaller, easier to use, more reliable. Yet their pricetags must be affordable; these devices are, after all, *office* printers whether they are in a home or business environment.

Printers from NEC Technologies offer all this and more, to help you keep your office operations competitive and future-ready.

The SuperScript™ 1260 and 1260N. Producing black-and-white text and graphics at a speedy throughput of 12 pages per minute (ppm), the NEC SuperScript 1260 and 1260N laser printers incorporate Adobe® PrintGear™ technology, the innovative printing architecture designed specifically to meet the needs of the office workgroup. Equipped with a 60MHz imaging processor, PrintGear processes print jobs faster, which translates into faster print time from the network queue. Add the user-friendly on-screen status monitor, simple setup, and customized Windows® drivers, and the SuperScript 1260 and 1260N laser printers — designed to work more efficiently than other typical business printers — deliver easy, hassle-free office printing solutions every time.



SuperScript 1260/1260N

First-rate print quality

Quality images are vital to business success. Featuring a crisp 600 dots-per-inch resolution with NEC's exclusive Sharp Edge Technology and 124 levels of gray, the SuperScript 1260 and 1260N laser printers produce professional-quality documents with sharp lines, smooth curves and a full

Bears stick with NEC Technologies' printers

"You don't stay one of the top football teams in the NFL without a lot of loyalty — loyalty to players, loyalty to fans, loyalty to every part of the business that helps you play well," says Greg Gershuny, director of IT systems for the Chicago Bears. "Whenever we find something that works, we stick with it. And, in fact, NEC Technologies printers have become part of the team that makes us successful."

Back in the early 1980s, "da Bears" made an exceptional draft pick: NEC Technologies printers, which were chosen along with its first PCs. The team found the devices so reliable and feature-rich that NEC Technologies printers remain this football organization's de facto standard.

Through the years, NEC Technologies' products have repeatedly offered the Bears more features than competitive products. When printers were limited to specific types of computers, NEC Technologies devices operated with PCs, Macintoshes and even terminals. These days, the Bears can download printer drivers from NEC Technologies via the Internet.

What's more, the Bears' organization has been impressed with the value NEC Technologies printers deliver.

"We've used NEC Technologies printers for 15 years and we feel the cost-to-value ratio is outstandingly in our favor," reports Gershuny. "And the SuperScript 1260 seems to be giving us even more. It's fun for us to know that we've picked a company, loved their product, have stuck with them for 15 years and they're giving us even more value for the dollar."

The organization now has approximately 50 NEC Technologies printers on a network that supports about 200 users and the devices have proven to be quite reliable.

"The printers just don't seem to break. They just keep running and running," Gershuny crows. "Rather than throw them away, we've donated our older models to nonprofit agencies like the Peace Corp."

Even under pressure, the team has stuck with NEC Technologies printers.

"Sometimes when we walked into the local computer store, a salesperson would try to sell us another brand," recalls Gershuny. "But we only buy NEC Technologies printers, even if we have to back order them. They're worth the wait."

range of definition. A graphical interface and customizable driver provide fast access to valuable printing features, including watermark, two-sided, proof sheet (n-up), booklet, poster, and photo-copy-ready printing.

Expandable, superior paper handling

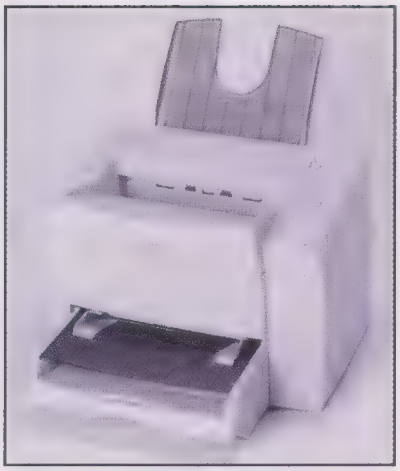
The SuperScript 1260 and 1260N laser printers have expandable paper capacity and special handling features that enable easy printing on transparencies, labels, envelopes, and many sizes and types of paper. An optional 500-sheet paper feeder increases paper-handling capacity to a maximum of 830 sheets — and an envelope cassette or a face-up output tray expands printer capabilities even more.

Multi-platform driver support

The SuperScript 1260 and 1260N laser printers include drivers for Windows® 3.1x, Windows® 95, Windows NT® 4.0, DOS, and Mac® OS (through EtherTalk® with Network Interface Card installed).

Networking protocol/NOS support

The SuperScript 1260 and 1260N laser printers have the speed, power, and adaptability to handle a variety of networking environments, including Novell® NetWare®, TCP/IP, Windows NT, EtherTalk, and Windows 95 peer-to-peer.



SuperScript 870

Web-friendly

The SuperScript 1260N allows end-users and network administrators to access their printer with any of their favorite Web browsers, providing a built-in current printer status monitor, access to printer setup instructions, and the latest printer driver files.

Supplemental help and ordering information for supplies and accessories are also available.

The New SuperScript 870. A high-performance personal business laser printer at an affordable price: that's what you'll get with NEC Technologies' SuperScript 870 laser printer. Designed for the demanding business professional, this printer offers true 600x600 dpi resolution, more than 128 levels of gray, fast 8-ppm throughput and a 10/100Base-T network option for efficient printer sharing.

The SuperScript 870 60 MHz image processor optimizes text and graphics print time. A broad selection of paper handling options support many kinds of printing needs. A high-capacity 6,000-page toner cartridge option, along with a standard 150-sheet multipurpose tray and a 500-sheet cassette option, enable you to take on the most printing-intensive tasks.

Expandable

And the SuperScript 870 is easy to expand, too. The printer's 2 MB of memory is user-upgradable to 16 MB using industry-standard 72-pin SIMMs. Of course, the SuperScript 870 supports Windows 95/98, Windows NT 4.0, Windows 3.1x and DOS. Support for UNIX and Macintosh environments is available via the printer's 10/100Base-T optional network interface.

The SuperScript 870 implements Adobe PrintGear technology, so it delivers capability not found in any other network-capable personal business printer — including enhanced engine-speed printing and high-speed, 100 MB network printing. An Adobe PostScript™ Software Printing Option makes the SuperScript 870 PostScript-compatible. Seventy-eight of Adobe's most popular Type 1 fonts and a 70-page online printing style guide are included to help you make your business printing look eye-catching and professional.

How'd you do it? With an NEC SuperScript 1260 printer

At the Lonely Planet, the office printer is the heart of the business.

In 1973, Maureen and Tony Wheeler traveled from England to Australia by car, boat, train and thumb. Inspired, they wrote their first travel guide, "Asia on the Cheap," answering the question: How'd you do it?

Written on a kitchen table and collated, trimmed and stapled by hand, the book instantly became a bestseller.

Today, the company employs a staff of 50 writers who traverse the planet in search of new places to stay, eat and experience. In its Oakland, Calif. office, a group of 30 editors, writers and designers transform all the experiences into books — via an NEC SuperScript 1260 laser printer.

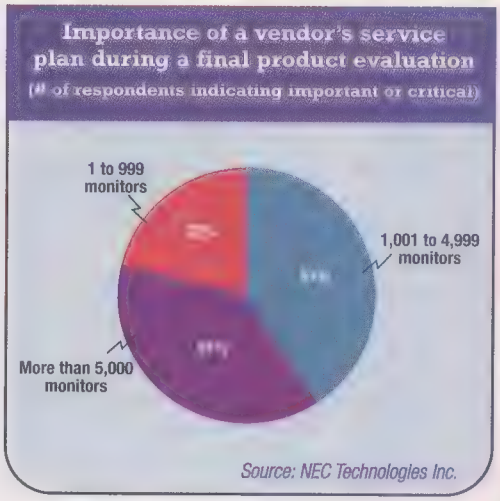
Help When You Need It—Always

PCs and the peripherals that make them useful no longer function merely as individual productivity tools. In many organizations, these devices support daily business applications — accounting, general ledger, order entry, salesforce automation — and they're running virtually continuously.

No wonder a vendor's ability to quickly service its products has become as important as any product feature.

A recent survey shows that 48 percent of NEC Technologies' corporate monitor customers regard the manufacturer's service plan as important during the final product evaluations. And the larger the corporation, the more important service becomes.

NEC Technologies has earned a position as one of the leading service companies in the computer industry, offering a spectrum of service and support features that demonstrate eagerness to work with customers and ensure satisfaction. Here's why:



Customer support

As computer product suppliers try to cut operating costs with new customer service techniques, it's now common to wait on hold for a half hour or more and pay for the manufacturer to fix the problem.

NEC Technologies has tried to make its programs more user-friendly. The difference starts when you pick up the telephone to call: On average, a real person answers within two minutes.

Quick repair or replacement

Each second of downtime can mean lost revenue and lost opportunities. So, anytime a device fails, you want a quick fix. NEC Technologies standard warranties offer unparalleled service and support. As a convenience to our customers, we offer 24 to 48 hours replacement of defective product or 72 hour repair turnaround. An example of an NEC Technologies' superior warranty offering is Instacare, a world-class service and support program for Visual Systems Division portable projectors.

Warranty programs

Service starts from the time of purchase. It's easy to judge a manufacturer's commitment by taking a close look at its warranty programs; NEC Technologies offers one of the best programs in the peripherals industry.

An inexpensive product may carry a warranty that's as short as

Fast problem-solving with NEC Technologies customer service

Bob Hall's Greenway Automall in Yakima, Wash. purchased an NEC Technologies printer in 1997. The previous printer was old and couldn't keep pace with a growing print load.

The IT department at the auto dealer, which has 165 employees, recommended an NEC Technologies laser printer. Installation went smoothly — but the printer experienced some technical difficulties.

So Tracy Sherbahn, a new car administrator, called the customer service department and demanded a replacement.

"I fully expected a fight and anticipated having to argue with supervisor after supervisor before having the request honored," she explains.

Instead, the NEC Technologies customer service representative placed an order for a replacement printer, which was delivered to the auto dealer's door within 48 hours.

"Usually, customer service representatives lack the authority to fix a problem," observes Sherbahn. "It was refreshing that this person could make a decision herself."

The new printer, meanwhile, has been operating for months without any failures.

A sampling of NEC Technologies' 1997 awards

Presenter: The 1997 *PC Magazine* Awards for Technical Excellence
Product: NEC's XtraView Technology
Award: Finalist/Display category
("Distortion-free viewing angle — a full 160-degree swath!")

Presenter: *PC Computing*'s Most Valuable Products Awards 1997
Product: NEC SuperScript 860
Award: MVP Winner/Desktop Laser Printer category
("Special printing options let you produce booklets, pack multiple pages on a single sheet, and even make your own watermarks!")

Presenter: *PC Computing*'s Most Valuable Products Awards 1997
Product: NEC SuperScript 1260N
Award: Finalist/Network Laser Printer category
("The perfect printer for small workgroups on a budget.")

Presenter: *PC Computing*'s Most Valuable Products Awards 1997
Product: NEC MultiSync P750
Award: Finalist/17-inch and 19-inch Monitor category
(Brilliant display remains flicker-free even at ultrahigh resolutions!")

Presenter: *PC Computing*'s Most Valuable Products Awards 1997
Product: NEC MultiSync P1150
Award: Finalist/20-inch and Larger Monitor category
("Brilliant image you've come to expect — only bigger and bolder!")

Presenter: *PC Computing*'s Most Valuable Products Awards 1997
Product: NEC MultiSync LCD2000
Award: MVP Winner/Flat-Panel Display category
("This flat-panel goes on forever!")

Presenter: *PC Computing*'s Most Valuable Products Awards 1997
Product: NEC MultiSync XM29 Plus
Award: MVP Winner/Presentation Hardware category
("What's better than a glorious 1,280-by-1,024 color monitor? How about 29 inches of this dazzling display?")

Presenter: *PC Magazine*'s Best of 1997
Product: NEC SuperScript 860
Award: Best of 1997/Laser Printer Category
("Business and SOHO users in the market for a fast and economical laser printer should look no further!")

Presenter: *PC Magazine*'s Editors' Choice 1997
Product: NEC MultiSync LCD400
Award: Editors' Choice/LCD Monitors
("Easy setup and configuration, excellent documentation, and a rock-steady image with no pronounced flaws — backed by a 3-year warranty ...make this NEC monitor the very best for the dollar!")

September 9, 1997
NEC MultiSync LCD400

30 days, so it runs out just as you really start working with the device. One-year warranties are quite common for monitors, but only companies with strong programs, like NEC Technologies, offer three-year warranties for their products.

NEC Technologies' ServiceXpress℠ program allows you to extend the length of your warranty or upgrade to overnight replacement delivery or on-site service on selected printer products.

Website training information

The Internet has made it possible for users to access product knowledge directly, so you can find out almost instantly what you want to know.

NEC Technologies has developed KnowledgeBase, an online information system on its website which now receives more than 15,000 hits each month. KnowledgeBase includes technical information on specific printers and monitors as well as help documents that outline steps to fix common problems like installing a new print driver or printing from an MS-DOS computer. It also carries frequently asked questions, user guides and additional help information.

Few computer peripheral suppliers offer the breadth of product and the depth of support of NEC Technologies.

So when it's time to add the peripherals that can make your environment more productive and more efficient, do your homework, explore the alternatives. And when you're done, chances are you'll choose NEC Technologies, where the balance between cost and quality is called *value*.

For more information, visit us at www.NEC.com or call (800) NEC-INFO.

NEC Technologies

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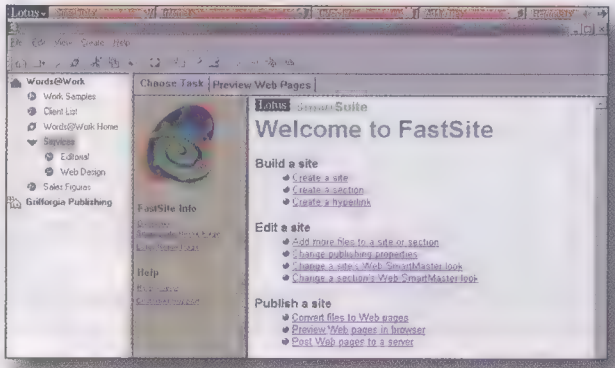
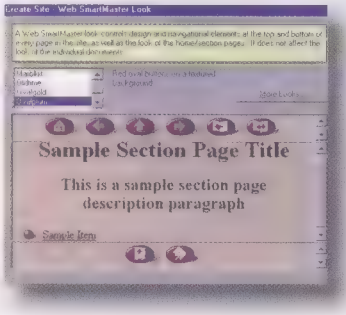
Suite for the New Millennium

Microsoft owns the suite market, but that's no reason not to consider Lotus's newest version of SmartSuite. With the SmartSuite Millennium Edition, Lotus has fine-tuned all the core applications. Lotus 1-2-3 and Word Pro now offer IBM ViaVoice Gold speech recognition and enhanced formatting options. Approach and Freelance Graphics now offer direct links for publishing documents to the Web. Lotus's ScreenCam utility adds audio to onscreen recording for multimedia movies. And Organizer includes group scheduling and calendaring for Lotus Notes, along with basic personal information management.

These improvements alone are enough to warrant an upgrade from SmartSuite 97 to Millennium Edition for many users. But the real reason to upgrade is FastSite, a true one-click solution for creating an office intranet. In a matter of minutes, FastSite builds a fully functional, uniformly formatted intranet.



Easy as 1-2-3 Lotus's update to its business application suite, SmartSuite Millennium includes dozens of new features that bring Web publishing to your fingertips. FastSite's ultraeasy tools make intranet publishing a snap.



No Heavy Lifting Give your site uniform design, layout, and navigation with one of SmartSuite's SmartMaster templates.

Building Blocks FastSite's step-by-step site building interface and automatic file conversion tools make creating or editing intranets a cinch, even for folks who have no experience with HTML or Web publishing. Even better, FastSite includes a variety of SmartMaster templates, which have color-coordinated backgrounds, bullets, and button art to give your pages a consistent look.

In less than five minutes, we combined Freelance Graphics, Lotus 1-2-3, Word Pro, and HTML files to form the skeleton of an intranet, complete with related content grouped into sections, and hyperlinks to the Internet. Once finished, FastSite converted our files into one of two Web-ready formats—basic HTML or Net-It Software's jDoc format. jDoc's tiny (35K) Java applet is akin to Adobe Acrobat, where you can preserve the rich formatting of files when you view them with a Java-enabled browser.

You can post a site to a hard drive on the network, to a Domino server, or to a remote Web site through FastSite's built-in FTP engine. In our beta copy, when sending files to an external Web server we experienced some pre-release glitches, such as odd case-sensitive filenames. Lotus is aware of the problem and plans to fix it in the shipping version. Other rough edges: FastSite requires pages with frames and has a space-hogging habit of storing every page in a separate folder with related buttons, icons, and other graphics.

Join Forces The suite's Team Computing features have been refined to make it even easier for workgroups to share, edit, and review documents using an e-mail tool. Offices running Lotus Notes can now use Organizer's group scheduling and calendar tools to enhance collaboration efforts. SmartSuite will also eventually work with eSuite, Lotus's forthcoming Java-based productivity suite designed for network computing. An enhanced Ask the Expert engine (similar to the one in Microsoft Office, but better) provides answers to natural-language questions you pose. And with ViaVoice Gold, you can dictate documents directly into Word Pro.

On its own, FastSite isn't enough reason to migrate from Microsoft Office to SmartSuite. But if you use Lotus's suite already, you'll want to switch. The time you save using FastSite to build and use an intranet easily will cover the cost of the upgrade. **BONNY L. GEORGIA**

FILEBOX

Lotus SmartSuite Millennium Edition

★★★★☆

Verdict: Build an instant intranet and get a full-featured application suite in the bargain.

Pros: First-rate applications; one-click intranet publishing; IBM ViaVoice Gold speech recognition; outstanding collaboration.

Cons: Requires up to 220MB of hard disk space to install the whole suite; FastSite documents are minimally customizable; no cross-platform support.

Competition: Microsoft Office 97 and Corel WordPerfect Suite 8 offer comparable applications. But SmartSuite makes Web publishing child's play.

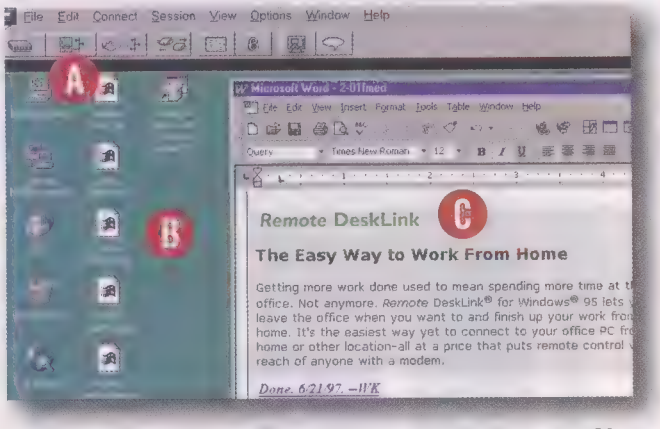
$399 est. street price, $149 for upgrade
Lotus Development Corp.
(800) 872-3387, (617) 577-8500
Enter 705 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

RATINGS: ★★★★★ EXCELLENT ★★★★ GOOD ★★★ ACCEPTABLE ★★ POOR ★ UNACCEPTABLE

Take Your Office with You

Work, work, and more work. Who doesn't feel chained to the office sometimes? You can't make your work go away, but you can make it come to you with remote-control software like Symantec pcAnywhere Express and Traveling Software Remote DeskLink for Windows 95.

Although neither program lets you transfer files from a remote PC to a local one, both let you access and control your desktop computer from afar. If you already use Symantec pcAnywhere32 8.0, download a copy of pcAnywhere Express for free and connect to your PC via Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator (instead of the pcAnywhere32 client). If you haven't already purchased a remote-control package and you don't need to transfer files, Remote DeskLink is an inexpensive, compact, and easy-to-use program that fits the bill.



Better Than Being There Traveling Software's $49 Remote DeskLink (above) and Symantec's free pcAnywhere Express let you control your office PC remotely.

A. Link to your host PC via connection options.

B. See and **control everything** on your host desktop.

C. Edit and save files in any desktop application.

Well Connected Symantec's pcAnywhere Express is a free Web option for pcAnywhere32 8.0 users.

Express Browsing Aptly named, Express's minimal features include a clipboard for cutting and pasting text and graphics between host and remote systems. Express is simple to install, and its toolbar makes for easy connections across a standard TCP/IP connection. To accommodate different screen resolutions, Express fits the host screen into the browser window, or lets you scroll around the high-resolution view. Basic security includes password protection and encryption.

In our tests, Express was a competent performer. Applications and data files opened quickly, and we could easily edit documents and read e-mail.

While pcAnywhere Express lets you use any Web browser to remotely control a host machine running pcAnywhere32 8.0, you must have a TCP/IP connection.

Long Distance For less than 50 bucks, Traveling Software's Remote DeskLink offers basic remote-computing features that let you control other PCs across analog phone lines, networks, or the Internet. And if you don't need the file-transfer features found in full-blown remote-access products, DeskLink is the way to go.

Remote DeskLink's clipboard lets you seamlessly transfer graphics and text between host and remote computers. Its comprehensive security includes password protection, encryption, screen blanking, mouse and keyboard locking, and remote callbacks. Installing and using DeskLink proved as simple as with pcAnywhere Express, but DeskLink offers more features, including better connection options. There's even a basic chat feature and a free three-month trial subscription to Absolute Software's CompuTrace, a system for tracking stolen PCs (it's $60 per year after the trial period).

If you already use pcAnywhere32 8.0, download a free copy of pcAnywhere Express for easy Web access. On the other hand, if you need remote access without file transfer, you can't beat Remote DeskLink. Either way, when you have to be—or want to be—away from the office, you can still get your job done. **WAYNE KAWAMOTO**

FILEBOX

Symantec pcAnywhere Express

☆☆☆☆

Verdict: A great way for pcAnywhere32 users to work remotely via any Web browser.

Pros: Free with pcAnywhere32 8.0 license; easy to install; includes password protection.

Cons: Lacks file-transfer features; connects only via a TCP/IP Internet connection.

System Requirements: Windows 95 or Windows NT, 100MHz Pentium, 32MB of RAM, 2MB of hard disk space, TCP/IP network protocol, Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0 or Netscape Navigator 3.0.

Free with pcAnywhere32 8.0 license
Symantec Corp.
(800) 441-7234
(541) 334-6054
Enter 708 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

Traveling Software Remote DeskLink For Windows 95

☆☆☆☆

Verdict: Competent, low-cost remote control via phone lines, networks, and the Internet.

Pros: Easy to set up, connect, and use; supports connections via analog phone lines, LANs, WANs, and the Internet; low price.

Cons: Lacks file-transfer features.

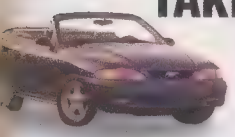
System Requirements: Windows 95, 486 CPU, 8MB of RAM, 7MB of hard disk space, modem or network access.

$49 est. street price
Traveling Software
(800) 343-8080
(206) 483-8088
Enter 709 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

RATINGS: ☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE

DISCOVER WHY FORD CHOSE THE WORLD'S MOST PRODUCTIVE DIAGRAMMING TOOL.

TAKE NEW FLOWCHARTER™ 7 FOR A FREE TEST DRIVE AT WWW.MICROGRAFX.COM/FORD



FlowCharter 7 is the driving force behind business process management at Ford Motor Company.

When Ford's Customer Service Division faced the daunting challenge of documenting all of its business processes to obtain ISO 9000 registration, they quickly shifted gears with the diagramming power of Micrografx FlowCharter 7. For their North American operations, FlowCharter proved to be an outstanding tool for understanding, documenting and communicating diverse processes.

Ford is one of many organizations, both large and small, that use FlowCharter. In fact, 60 of the Fortune 100 corporations have found it to be the easiest, quickest and most productive diagramming tool for their business processes.

FlowCharter isn't just another diagramming tool. You can diagram any process across any number of pages, with intelligent lines that automatically re-route, and shapes that quickly drop intoplace.

New FlowCharter 7 offers more powerful tools than the previous version — ABC FlowCharter. It includes revolutionary Living FlowCharts™ that turn static diagrams into dynamic interactive processes and CoolSheet™ Templates that jump start the most common diagrams. In short, Micrografx FlowCharter bolsters productivity, refines processes, streamlines quality initiatives, helps you attain ISO-9000 certification, and makes your business run smoother.

Don't forget the perfect companion to FlowCharter — Optima! It quickly helps you simulate and improve all your processes.

Request a FREE full-working 30 Day Trial of FlowCharter 7 at www.micrografx.com/ford. Or call 1-800-418-8387.

MICROGRAFX®

Infolink 399 at: www.pccomputing.com/infolink

Canada call 800-360-8464. For license pricing on Micrografx FlowCharter, please contact Micrografx directly or call your preferred corporate reseller. ©1998 Micrografx Inc. All rights reserved. All trademarks are owned by their respective companies.

Picture The Possibilities

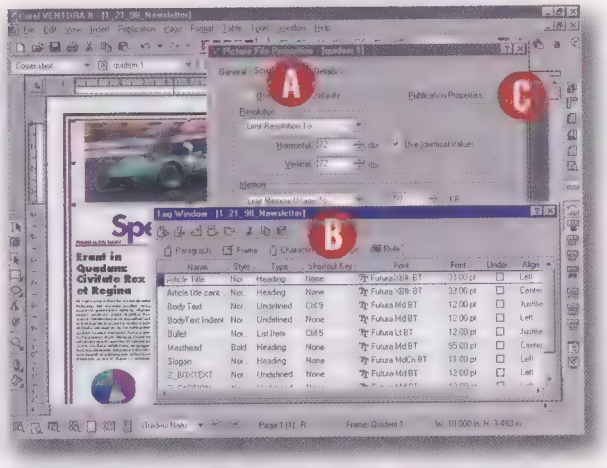
Publish Volumes in Record Time

If you're struggling to choose one desktop publishing package, Corel's Ventura 8 doesn't make the decision any easier. Past performance glitches are gone—instead, scads of new features, along with clever interface enhancements, make this the most useful Ventura incarnation ever.

Previous versions suffered from poky file management and sluggish screen redraw speeds. Ventura 8, in contrast, sings along. Quick screen-response and redraw times, almost instantaneous document loading and saving, and faster printing give the program a truly solid feel—and give established Ventura shops a reason to explore the new design and improved drawing features.

Quick Draw In addition to the performance gains, Ventura 8 is packed with timesaving features. You can quickly adjust the onscreen resolution of scanned images in your layout by right-clicking on an image—great if you need to see your scan in high resolution. When you're done, simply bring the resolution back down. The tab also lets you set the maximum amount of memory dedicated to the image.

Version 8's drawing tools let you create graphic designs without leaving the program. Combine images you create into a single graphics picture object, and even export them in a variety of formats, including Windows Metafile (WMF), Adobe Illustrator (AI), and TIFF. Improved integration with Corel Photo-Paint lets you apply Photo-Paint– as well as Adobe Photoshop–compatible plug-in effects to images in Ventura 8, just as you can in Adobe PageMaker 6.5 now.

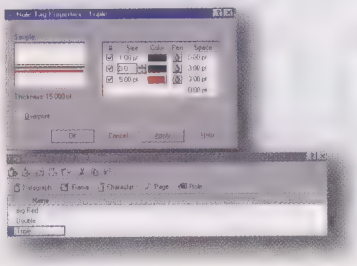


Most Improved Need a desktop publisher that does it all? Corel Ventura 8 sports faster onscreen response along with a host of new features and interface refinements.

A. Set the onscreen resolution of scanned images in your layout for the best output.

B. Ventura's **Tag Window** puts formatting tags just a mouse click away.

C. Push-button jumps to other relevant properties' dialog boxes save time.



Ventura Rules The custom ruling lines in Ventura 8 are styles you can tag for table cells, frames, and even text.

With each new version of Ventura, Corel has added features while saving you keystrokes, and this trend matures in version 8. For example, in the Picture Properties dialog box, you can quickly access the separate Publication Properties dialog box without actually opening it—just click on the Publication Properties button and make your changes. You'll find this intuitive approach in most of Ventura's dialog boxes.

The redesigned Tag Window gives you a unified view of all the format tags in your layout. And within that window, Ventura adds two new tag categories: Page Tags, which takes over the former Master Pages function; and Rule Tags, which lets you define the style of ruling lines so that you can quickly apply custom rules to frames, text paragraphs, and table cells. To save time, Ventura 8 automatically tags the frames you create, letting you establish a default frame tag of a particular size and style.

Web Smarts There are dozens of other new features in the program, including a chapter navigation list for easy movement in long documents, a Search and Replace toolbar, and other click-savers. New Web features include better frame control when converting to HTML, improved hyperlinking, and conversion of typeset equations. According to Corel, Ventura 8 will also be Year 2000–compliant. And in the Corel tradition, Ventura 8 comes with a healthy bundle of current Corel products, including Photo-Paint 8, WordPerfect 8, and CorelScan, in addition to 40,000 clip art images, 1,000 fonts, and 1,000 photos.

Corel Ventura 8 is still a workhorse champ for long documents, but its new graphics tools make it a more well-rounded desktop publishing program. And in both areas, Ventura gives a giant boost in working efficiency that lets you publish more documents with less fatigue. **BOB WEIBEL**

FILEBOX

Corel Ventura 8

★★★★

Verdict: Timesaving way to publish long documents and design graphics-rich pages.

Pros: Efficient interface; strong professional features; excellent table-building tools.

Cons: Still trails QuarkXPress and PageMaker for shorter, more artistic documents.

Competition: Adobe FrameMaker offers stronger SGML support and more detailed control over long-document structure, but is harder to use and less graphically oriented.

System Requirements: Windows 95 or NT 4.0, Pentium CPU, 16MB of RAM, 80MB of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive.

$589 est. street price; $99 for upgrade from version 7, $179 for upgrade from all other versions
Corel Corp.
(800) 772-6735
Enter 710 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

RATINGS: ★★★★★ EXCELLENT ★★★★ GOOD ★★★ ACCEPTABLE ★★ POOR ★ UNACCEPTABLE

Includes Internet phone capabilities ...

Communication Software for Busy People

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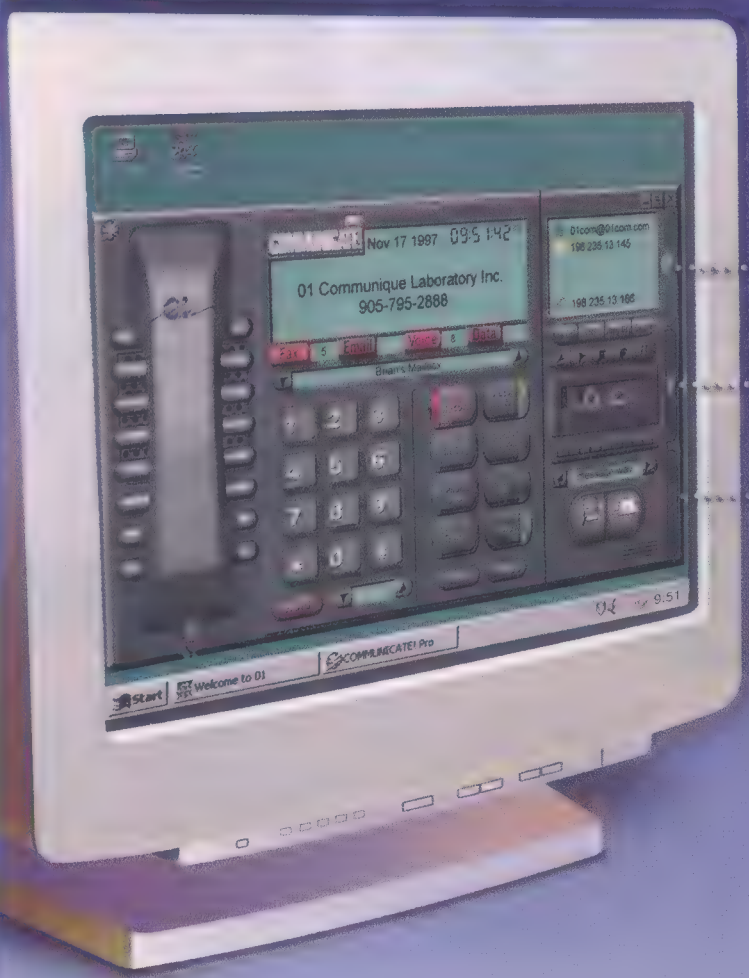

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- Fax back and Fax-on-Demand
- Customize cover pages
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- Record phone conversations
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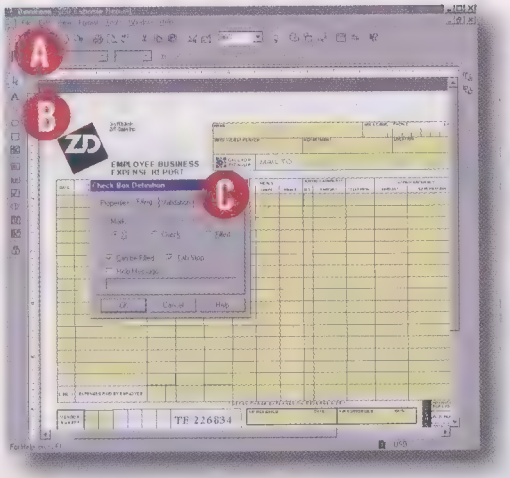
Infolink 380 at: www.pccomputing.com/infolink

Electronic Forms Made Easy

SNEAK PREVIEW

Typewriters are big, clumsy, and loud. But they've had a leg up on PCs in one area: filling out forms neatly, legibly and, for the most part, inside the lines. But now, thanks to Caere OmniForm 3.0, you can finally send that typewriter to the junkyard. OmniForm bests any typewriter—or typist—with its stunningly accurate text recognition, comprehensive form-design features, and free filler software you can send to anyone via Windows-based e-mail.

If your company is like most, you probably still use several kinds of paper-based forms. Why not scan in all your paper forms, customize them, and let people fill them out on their PCs? OmniForm lets you do it all: scan premade paper forms, redesign and edit them, and create new forms from scratch.

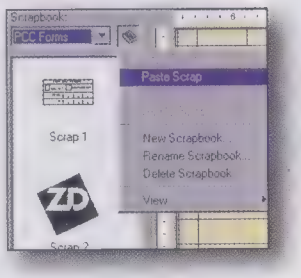


A. From the Edit menu, **change an object's properties** with the Convert command.

B. Use the **drawing toolbar** to design and customize a form.

C. Keep tight control over how people fill a form object.

Presto! Caere's OmniForm 3.0 scans and converts complex forms. It recognizes logos and checkboxes, and sets up logical relationships between form objects.



Mix and Match OmniForm's Scrapbook lets you save and categorize objects to grab and add to a form anytime.

Good Form OmniForm 3.0 improves on version 2.0's shortcomings and makes deft use of Caere's top-notch OCR technology, which recognizes graphics, reversed text (white on black), vertical text, and font sizes as small as 6 points. The forms we scanned featured blue (not black) text, numerous checkboxes, grids, a company logo, and reversed and vertical text. OmniForm barely missed a beat, stumbling only on very small, cramped 6-point text, as well as some of the lighter grid lines. It accurately recognized about 96 percent of one form's fillable area—not bad considering that the form featured around 500 fillable cells.

You don't have to be a graphics pro to create, redesign, and edit forms with OmniForm. Straightforward toolbars put design elements at your fingertips—text, lines, and checkboxes, plus commands like Bring to Front, Align Left, and more. It took us only a few minutes to get used to the way Design Mode works. Just select any object to move it and change its size, or right-click on it to alter its attributes, to copy it, to convert it to a different object type, and so on. We only wish it provided a way to erase tiny stray marks (usually lines)—as much as we tried, we could not get OmniForm to select these marks so we could delete them.

Advanced form designers will easily master those basics and jump right into creating complex forms with drop-down menus, automatic background calculations (for order totals, for example), customized tab sequence, and the option to break tables into distinct objects. Need to redo a formula? Don't bother reentering the totals—let OmniForm take care of that automatically. And its new Calculation Builder walks you through creating equations from scratch.

Between the Lines Filling out the forms is painless. Those who don't have the full Caere package installed—recipients such as customers, remote employees, or survey participants—have two options. You can send them a filler applet via e-mail (100 applets come free with OmniForm) or convert your forms to Microsoft Word 95 or 97. And sharing forms on your company's Windows NT network is a snap. Everyone on the network can view and fill out the same form; OmniForm compiles the information in a central database for network collaboration.

You'll appreciate extras like the Shrink Page to Fit feature, which dynamically resizes a form to fit any size paper you specify. The Scrapbook lets you save and categorize design elements from any form to use later. And safeguard all your forms and the information in them with password protection.

You've transferred the rest of your office life to your PC, so now it's time to store your company's forms electronically as well. With Caere OmniForm 3.0, scanning, filling out, and saving your forms is easier than using that clunky old typewriter. **LESLIE AYERS**

FILEBOX

Caere OmniForm 3.0

☆☆☆☆☆

Verdict: Dump your typewriter, stop filling out forms by hand, and put your company's documents where they belong—on a PC.

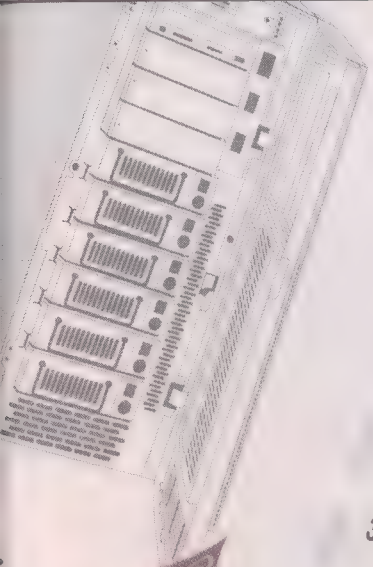
Pros: Stunning accuracy and intuitive recognition of form elements; multiple fill options; new design tools offer even greater control.

Cons: Could use a few more design tools—particularly an erase feature.

System Requirements: Windows 95 or NT 4.0, 486 CPU, 8MB of RAM, 10MB of hard disk space.

$149 est. street price
Caere Corp.
(800) 654-1187
(408) 395-7000
Enter 711 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

RATINGS: ☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE



THE SERVER QUIZ.....
or "How to tell if you're a data slave"

Circle the best answer to the following:

1. **My cubicle is more comfortable than:**
   - a) *a prison cell*
   - b) *a cold toilet seat*
   - c) *my home*
2. **My spouse would be happier if I were:**
   - a) *rich*
   - b) *better looking*
   - c) *a long haul trucker so I could spend more time at home*
3. **My server maintenance routine often involves:**
   - a) *backups*
   - b) *diagnostics*
   - c) *offerings to the gods.*

IF YOU ANSWERED 'C' TO ANY OF THE ABOVE THEN IT'S TIME TO LOOK AT THE STEPSERVER™ DS BY EVEREX.

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Infolink 267 at: www.pccomputing.com/infolink

Bring Out Your Best Art

SNEAK PREVIEW

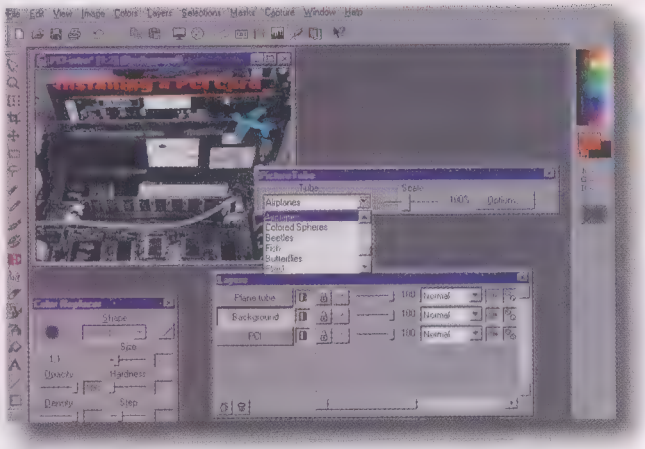
Wish you had opted for that graphics degree instead of an MBA? Don't sweat it. Just pick up Jasc Software's Paint Shop Pro 5. It's full of new features and has excellent integration with high-end programs such as Adobe Photoshop.

Paint Shop Pro has always been great for image conversions. Version 5 includes over 30 file formats, plus direct support for several Kodak digital cameras.

Paint Shop Pro now creates images in layers. Each of the layers can be processed individually, so you can apply effects such as variable opacity to any element in your image. One clever feature is that a layer doesn't have to be selected for you to edit it. Your mouse automatically drills through layers that have no color information, so you can modify an element even if it's several layers below.

A fun extra is Picture Tubes, colorful clip art–like images that paint on the screen as you drag the mouse. The program comes with about 30 Picture Tubes in categories like cars, leaves, and alphabet blocks.

Paint Shop Pro 5 is an essential graphics utility, whether as a complement to a high-end paint program or on its own. DAVE JOHNSON



Paint Job You don't have to be an artist to create presentable graphics with Jasc Software's Paint Shop Pro 5.

FILEBOX

Jasc Software Paint Shop Pro 5

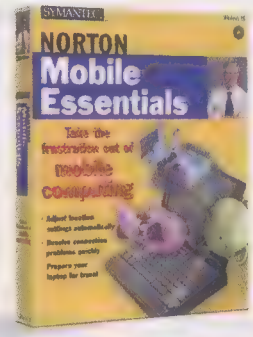
☆☆☆☆

Verdict: An inexpensive alternative—or companion—to a high-end graphics program.

Pros: Great editing and conversion tools.

Cons: No clip art; templates limit advanced users.

$79 est. street price
Jasc Software
(800) 622-2793, (612) 930-9800
Enter 712 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink



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Compaq Deskpro® EP Series Model 6400X/6400/CDS **$2,269**[1]

- Intel® Pentium® II Processor @ 400 MHz
- 64MB SDRAM
- 6.4GB SMART II Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- ATI RAGE PRO TURBO AGP Graphics
- 24X Max CD-ROM[2]
- Compaq V75 17" (16" viewable) monitor
- Towerable chassis converts from desktop to minitower
- 3-year limited warranty[3]

Compaq Deskpro EP Series Model 6266X/2100 **$1,299**[1]

- Intel Celeron™ Processor @ 266 MHz
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- ATI RAGE IIC AGP Graphics
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- Intel® Pentium® II Processor @ 300 MHz
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- 3.2GB SMART II Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- ATI RAGE IIC AGP Graphics
- 24X Max CD-ROM[2]
- Compaq V75 17" (16" viewable) monitor
- Towerable chassis converts from desktop to minitower
- 3-year limited warranty[3]

Deskpro EN 6266X/3200 $1,669[1]

The Deskpro EN Series features a breakthrough design that raises the bar on manageability and serviceability.

- Intel Pentium II Processor @ 266 MHz
- 16MB SDRAM
- 3.2GB SMART II Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- ATI RAGE PRO TURBO AGP Graphics
- Compaq Premier Sound
- Compaq V75 17" (16" viewable) monitor
- 3-year limited warranty[3]

Deskpro EN 6350X/6400 $2,219[1]

- Intel Pentium II Processor @ 350 MHz
- 32MB SDRAM
- 6.4GB SMART II Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- ATI RAGE PRO TURBO 2X AGP Graphics
- Compaq 10/100 TX PCI Intel NIC with Remote Wakeup
- Compaq Premier Sound
- Compaq V75 17" (16" viewable) monitor
- 3-year limited warranty[3]

Options for Deskpro

- Additional 32MB SDRAM Memory: $139[1]
- Upgrade to Compaq V90 Monitor: $349[1]
- SuperDisk LS-120 Drive: $129[1]
- Compaq C-Series 810 Handheld: $599[1]

COMPAQ ARMADA NOTEBOOKS

The New Armada 7800 $4,869[1]

The first Mobile Pentium II processor-based notebook from Compaq delivering the highest performance with unprecedented desktop functionality and mobile convenience.

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- 20X Max CD-ROM[2]
- 33.6Kbps Telephony modem (K56flex upgradable)[4]
- Li Ion battery
- Integrated AC adapter
- Multibay design supports second hard drive, second battery, SuperDisk LS-120 drive, or DVD option
- Full docking support capabilities with the ArmadaStation Expansion Base

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The high-performance notebook with an innovative expandable design delivering desktop functionality.

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- 20X Max CD-ROM[2]
- 33.6Kbps Telephony modem (K56flex upgradable)[4]
- Li Ion battery
- Integrated AC adapter
- Multibay design supports second hard drive, second battery, or SuperDisk LS-120 Drive
- Full docking support capabilities with the ArmadaStation Expansion Base

Armada 7362 $3,219[1]

The high-performance notebook with the perfect combination of small size, light weight, and full desktop functionality.

- Intel Pentium Processor with MMX Technology @ 233 MHz
- 3.0GB SMART Hard Drive
- 32MB EDO RAM
- 12.1" CTFT SVGA display
- 20X Max CD-ROM[2]
- 33.6Kbps Telephony modem (K56flex upgradable)[4]
- Li Ion battery
- Multibay design supports second hard drive or SuperDisk LS-120 drive
- As light as 5.6 lbs and only 1.5" thin
- Full docking support capabilities with the ArmadaStation Expansion Base

Options for Armada 7000 family of notebook computers

- ArmadaStation Expansion Base: $779[1]
- ArmadaStation Tower Stand: $99[1]
- Compaq Briefcase: $99[1]

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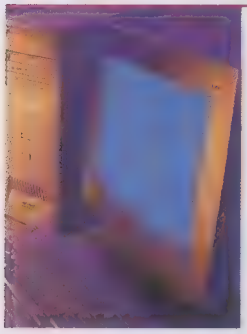

COMPAQ DESKPRO EP SERIES SMALL BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

These Compaq product bundles have been designed specifically for growing businesses. They come pre-installed with Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0, Norton AntiVirus 4.0 and INEX Commerce Court Publisher.

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- 2.1GB SMART II Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- ATI RAGE IIC AGP Graphics
- 24X Max CD-ROM[2]
- K56flex Data/Fax modem[4]
- Microsoft Word 97
- Compaq Microsoft® IntelliMouse™
- Compaq V75 17" (16" viewable) monitor
- 3-year limited warranty[3]

Model 6300/4300/CDSM $1,869[1]

- Intel Pentium II Processor @ 300 MHz
- 32MB SDRAM
- 4.3GB SMART II Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- ATI RAGE IIC AGP Graphics
- 24X Max CD-ROM[2]
- K56flex Data/Fax modem[4]
- Microsoft Office 97 Small Business Edition
- Compaq Microsoft IntelliMouse
- Compaq V75 17" (16" viewable) monitor
- 3-year limited warranty[3]

Model 6400/6400/CDSM $2,369[1]

- Intel Pentium II Processor @ 400 MHz
- 64MB SDRAM
- 6.4GB SMART II Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- ATI RAGE PRO TURBO AGP Graphics
- 24X Max CD-ROM[2]
- Microsoft Office 97 Small Business Edition
- K56flex Data/Fax modem[4]
- Compaq Microsoft IntelliMouse
- Compaq V75 17" (16" viewable) monitor
- 3-year limited warranty[3]

COMPAQ ARMADA SB SMALL BUSINESS NOTEBOOK SOLUTION

Specifically designed for the small and medium-sized business customer, the Armada SB is the fully integrated notebook that features Microsoft Office 97 Small Business Edition.

Armada SB Notebook $2,099[1]

- Intel Pentium Processor with MMX Technology @ 200 MHz
- 3.2GB SMART Hard Drive
- 32MB RAM
- 12.1" CSTN SVGA display
- 20X MAX CD-ROM[2]
- K56flex modem[4]
- NiMH battery
- Integrated AC adapter
- Dual bay design supports second battery (one NiMH ships standard)
- Microsoft Office 97 Small Business Edition and Norton AntiVirus 4.0 preloaded

COMPAQ PROSIGNIA 200 SMALL BUSINESS SERVER SOLUTION

An integrated turnkey solution for small businesses needing inexpensive file/print, communications, or database capabilities and bulletproof server reliability without the overhead cost of in-house technical expertise.

ProSignia 200 Small Business Server $5,069[1]

- Intel Pentium II Processor @ 300 MHz
- 64MB ECC memory (upgradable to 384MB)
- 4.3GB Wide Ultra SCSI-3 enterprise-class hard disk
- 4/8GB SLR enterprise-class tape drive
- K56flex modem[4]
- Pre-installed Microsoft Back Office Small Business Server including 10 user clients (upgradable to 25 user clients) and Insight Agent Events Notification Tool
- Send/receive e-mail or fax across the room or around the world
- Extend your business to the Internet, either locally or through an Internet service provider
- Back up and protect your business data quickly, easily, and efficiently
- Efficiently share data and devices such as printers and modems
- Compaq V55 15" (13.7" viewable) monitor with 1-year limited warranty[3]
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COMPAQ
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Compaq Armada™ 1505 $1,599[1]

- Intel® Pentium® Processor with MMX™ Technology @ 200 MHz
- Integrated 20X Max CD-ROM[2], K56flex modem[4], and AC adapter
- 2.1GB Hard Drive
- 32MB RAM (expandable to 96MB)
- 12.1" CSTN SVGA display
- NiMH battery
- Dual bay design supports second battery

Compaq Armada 1573 $2,299[1]

- Intel Pentium Processor with MMX Technology @ 233 MHz
- Integrated 20X Max CD-ROM[2], K56flex modem[4], and AC adapter
- 3.2GB SMART Hard Drive
- 32MB RAM (expandable to 96MB)
- 12.1" CSTN SVGA display
- Li Ion battery
- Dual bay design supports second battery

Compaq Armada 1592 $2,869[1]

- Intel Pentium Processor with MMX Technology @ 233 MHz
- Integrated 20X Max CD-ROM[2], K56flex modem[4], and AC adapter
- 3.2GB SMART Hard Drive
- 32MB RAM (expandable to 96MB)
- 12.1" CTFT SVGA display
- Li Ion battery
- Dual bay design supports second battery

Options for Armada 1500 family of notebooks

- Convenience base with Ethernet $279[1]
- 2nd Li Ion battery pack $189[1]
- Compaq Briefcase $99[1]

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COMPAQ
May the best idea win.

Speak Freely over the Net

The East European market is wide open. You've caught the heady scent of zlotys and rubles and even established an overseas office. But check out those monster phone bills—a 15-minute call from Manhattan to your man in Moscow can run nearly 40 dollars. Want a better way to stay in touch with Sergei? Say *nyet* to the telcos and check out Aplio's Aplio/Phone and InnoMedia's InfoTalk, two devices that plug into your phone and let you make calls over the Internet virtually for free to anyone, across the country or around the world.

Internet Talk Is Cheap
Slashing your long-distance bill is easy. For less than $400 per pair, the InnoMedia InfoTalk (left) and the Aplio/Phone route your calls over the Web via a point-to-point IP connection.

Free Speech Setting up the devices is a chore, but you only have to do it once. Using your telephone keypad, you enter user information, including your ISP dial-up number, account name, and password. It's an awkward process at best.

But when the units are configured and plugged in—between the telephone and the wall jack, like an answering machine—placing your calls over the Net is as easy as pressing a button. With the Aplio/Phone, that means calling someone who also has an Aplio/Phone, pressing the Aplio button when they answer, then hanging up. The Aplio/Phone then makes a point-to-point IP connection with the unit on the other end in less than a minute. When the connection is completed, both phones ring. Goodbye, per-minute billing.

The InfoTalk works in a similar way, except that you press the pound key when the receiving party answers, and you don't have to hang up during the IP connection.

Just last year Internet telephony meant lousy sound and serious lags. But today's sound quality is vastly improved. Under ideal conditions you'll experience crisp audio and a half-second delay, which is not much worse than some international connections on standard lines. We placed domestic calls with each device and found conversation easy once we adjusted to the slight sound delays. Both devices are full duplex, so both parties can talk at the same time—though the lag might lead to conversational chaos. And that lag gets worse when Internet traffic is heavy.

The Aplio/Phone doubles as a speakerphone. It has the edge in penny-pinching, with an economy mode that eliminates the need for the initial phone call. But both callers must predetermine a time for the call, and the receiving party has to sit by the phone and wait for the Aplio button to flash a signal that the connection is live.

Smooth Operator The InfoTalk is jazzier, with a two-line LCD that allows for caller ID, time display, and a directory of your favorite numbers. During a Net call, a graph indicates Web traffic volume, which can affect communication quality. The screen also eases the configuration process. The InfoTalk is cleverly designed to sit under your phone (unlike the round-topped Aplio/Phone, which nevertheless has an appealing shape in a retro, VW Bug sort of way).

It's important to remember that in order for the Aplio/Phone and the InfoTalk to work, each party must use the same kind of device (the two products aren't compatible) and have an ISP account. And neither device offers impressive documentation, so think twice about sending a unit to techno-disabled relatives unless you can set it up for them.

Another caveat: the feds. While the Federal Communications Commission hasn't acted yet, it's likely that Internet telephony will be regulated, which will make the low cost vs. telco calls moot. But for now, if you want frequent communication with far-flung friends or business partners, the Aplio/Phone and the InfoTalk are two of the best cost-cutting solutions since e-mail. GORDON BASS

FILEBOX

Aplio Aplio/Phone
☆☆☆

Verdict: A no-frills solution for making free phone calls via the Internet, but it's tricky to configure.

Pros: Economy mode eliminates the need (and charge) for an initial call.

Cons: More awkward than the InfoTalk to set up; no display.

$199 each, $378 for a pair, est. street prices
Aplio
(888) 642-7546
(650) 794-2760
Enter 722 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

InnoMedia InfoTalk
☆☆☆

Verdict: Place free phone calls over the Internet to anywhere in the world with the press of a button.

Pros: The LCD simplifies setup and use; clever features like Internet traffic monitoring.

Cons: No way to avoid being charged for the initial call.

$199 each, $398 for a pair, est. street prices
InnoMedia
(888) 251-6250
(408) 562-3535
Enter 723 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

RATINGS: ☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE

Fight E-Mail Overload

E-mail is as important as the telephone for most businesses. You wouldn't put up with a clunky old rotary phone, so why put up with a lousy e-mail client? Upgrade to Qualcomm's $59 Eudora Pro CommCenter 4.0, and you'll never look back. With a raft of new features and smart extras, CommCenter is the best way to keep from drowning in electronic messages.

Smart Mailbox The first thing faithful Eudora users will notice about CommCenter 4.0 is a much-needed overhaul to the previous version's interface. Stylized icons and folders spiff up the main desktop, and a dockable tabbed window puts favorite tools like signatures, stationery, and a mini view of Windows Explorer at your fingertips. The best timesaver is the new preview window, which lets you peek at the contents of a message without opening it.

Under the surface, Eudora's automated filters and folder-management tools are better than ever. You can create and customize filters on the fly by right-clicking on any mailbox message and choosing the Make Filter command. Gone are the days of double-clicking on a folder to file your messages in a hidden mailbox. Dragging a message over a closed folder now causes hidden mailboxes to fly open for filing convenience. For those bored by plain-vanilla text, HTML styles are an attractive option—in fact, you can view entire Web pages and click on hyperlinks to launch your browser.

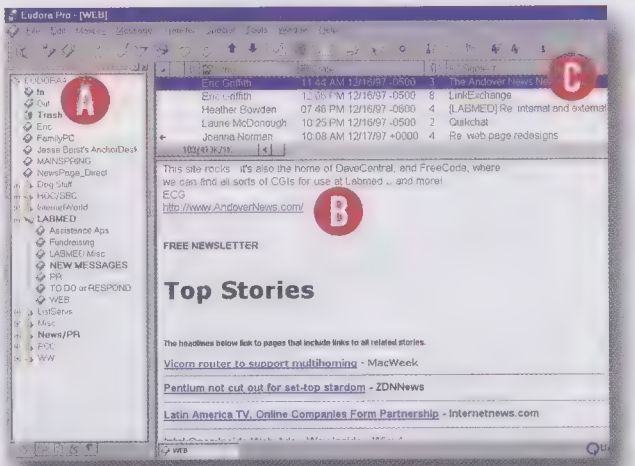
Like its predecessor, Eudora Pro Email 3.0, Eudora Pro CommCenter 4.0 lets you set up multiple POP3 account identities so you can keep your personal and work accounts separate. Corporate users will appreciate the IMAP support, which synchronizes desktop folders and mailboxes with those on an IMAP-compliant e-mail server. Missing an important phone number? Search for it on the Bigfoot or Switchboard Web sites from within Eudora's Address book, using the new Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) directory assistance utility.

Special Delivery In addition to a powerful e-mail client, CommCenter Pro comes with eight optional plug-ins. Each one tightly integrates with Eudora's interface, eliminating the need to buy and configure separate third-party utilities. Some of the best add-ons include Aladdin System's StuffIt compression utility (which also supports ZIP file compression), Verity KeyView for file viewing, McAfee VirusScan, and Pretty Good Privacy keys that encrypt and authenticate sensitive messages.

Even with all these bells and whistles, CommCenter has some shortcomings. For example, a type-ahead feature to automatically fill in names and e-mail addresses as you start typing (found in Claris Emailer and Netscape Messenger) would be an improvement over CommCenter's awkward three-key shortcut. But the longest overdue are one-click backup and restore tools for archiving messages and upgrading from one version of Eudora to another.

Caveats aside, CommCenter Pro's plug-in approach provides conveniences you won't find in other e-mail packages. If you can't imagine life without e-mail, check out Eudora CommCenter Pro 4.0.

BONNY L. GEORGIA

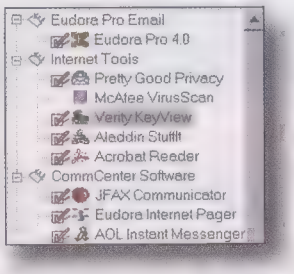


Junk Buster Fight e-mail overload without making it a full-time job. Qualcomm's $59 Eudora Pro CommCenter 4.0 includes agents and smart filters to sort your e-mail into folders—before you even open it.

A. Filter your messages into multiple folders and custom mailboxes.

B. Preview your Mail, even when it contains embedded HTML formatting and attachments.

C. Get one-click access to most plug-ins.



À la Carte CommCenter includes eight optional e-mail components you can add to the core program, from antivirus tools to encryption keys.

FILEBOX

Eudora Pro CommCenter 4.0

☆☆☆☆

Verdict: Industrial-strength e-mail for the entire office.

Pros: Install the e-mail client only and add extra features as you need them; customizable filters and drag-and-drop support make managing your messages a breeze.

Cons: Some plug-ins are fee-based, others require specific user tools; address book needs work; no easy backup and restore solutions.

Competition: Eudora's combination of plug-in applications, IMAP support, and multiple POP3 account management pushes it far ahead of competitors like Microsoft Outlook 97 and CommTouch Software Pronto97 in the dedicated office e-mail arena.

System Requirements: Windows 95 or Windows NT 4.0, 16MB of RAM, 6MB of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive, POP3 or IMAP e-mail account, and Internet access.

$59 est. street price, $39 for upgrade
Qualcomm
(800) 238-3672, (619) 658-1291
Enter 726 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

RATINGS: ☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE

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DENEBA

More Web, Less Wait

You don't really have work in the office this weekend, but the thought of having the T1 line all to yourself is just too tempting. Why not speed up your Internet access from home? Three of the latest acceleration tools—Connectix Surf Express, IMSI NetAccelerator Deluxe, and PeakSoft PeakJet 1.5—promise to shift your surfing into the fast lane for $50 or less. That is, provided your online habits match their magic.

Speed Reader While you read Web pages, NetAccelerator downloads additional links in the background. If you click on a link that NetAccelerator has already cached, the Web page appears immediately. Unlike Surf Express and PeakJet, NetAccelerator relies on your browser's built-in cache for storage.

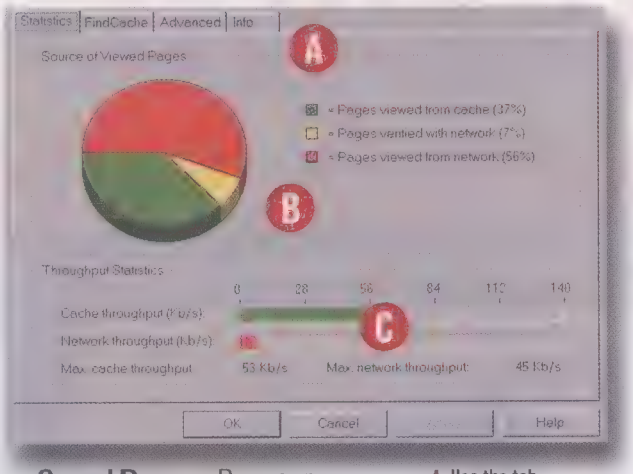
Installation is simple, and since NetAccelerator runs in the background there's little to worry about once it's installed. It works best when you browse at a leisurely pace. For example, while you catch up on the latest Net news, NetAccelerator fetches and loads content, like the *PC Computing* Web site, that you might want to read next. But if you jump from page to page without waiting for the graphics and text to load, you won't see any speed gains.

Peeking Ahead Like NetAccelerator, PeakJet has agents (called Lookaheads) that anticipate where you'll browse next, and it preloads the next few links to your hard disk for faster access. To make sure your cache is up to date, PeakJet's Freshener agents compare your hard disk cache with files on the Web and downloads new copies when necessary. It's easy to customize PeakJet's performance by changing the settings, and you can even use it for offline browsing.

PeakJet 1.5 replaces your browser's cache with a proprietary cache it accesses via a proxy server. For most users the proxy requirement is hassle free, since the software returns your browser to its default settings when you close PeakJet. But this wasn't always the case in our tests using Netscape Navigator 4.0.

Surf Express takes a different approach. It doesn't anticipate your next move, but replaces your browser's cache with an advanced database that holds up to seven times the data in the same amount of space. Returning to the same site again and again will boost the site's importance in the database, and it will load faster.

Whether a browser accelerator works or not depends on your surfing habits. If you usually visit the same sites repeatedly, you can't beat Surf Express's speedy cache storage, SmartFetch updates, and FindCache search utility. But if you like to explore the Web at a relaxed pace or multitask while surfing, you'll benefit from NetAccelerator's or PeakJet's cache of preloaded links. BONNY L. GEORGIA



Speed Demon Rev your sluggish Internet connection with Web cache enhancement tools such as Connectix Surf Express (above), IMSI NetAccelerator Deluxe, and PeakSoft PeakJet 1.5.

A. Use the tab interface to check performance or change settings.

B. Quickly view the source of cached pages.

C. Easily analyze your throughput statistics.

Going Somewhere? PeakJet's Lookahead Status window shows just how many links it has cached from the page you're viewing.

FILEBOX

Surf Express

☆☆☆☆

Verdict: The best way to browse your favorite Web sites faster than ever.

Pros: FindCache utility lets you locate archived files; SmartFetch keeps cache files up to date.

Cons: Instant-gratification types need not apply—this one requires consistent, continual use for the best results; the more storage you have, the better.

$35 est. street price
Connectix
(800) 950-5880, (650) 571-5100
Enter 727 at
www.pccomputing.com/infolink

NetAccelerator Deluxe

☆☆☆

Verdict: Turbocharge your tortoise-paced Web access without Java or extra cache.

Pros: Easy to use, no requirements for Java or secondary cache files; includes several handy extras.

Cons: Doesn't automatically update your cache.

$50 est. street price
IMSI
(800) 833-8082, (415) 257-3000
Enter 728 at
www.pccomputing.com/infolink

PeakJet 1.5

☆☆☆

Verdict: A conservative shot in the arm for your browser.

Pros: Intelligent preloading; ultrasimple interface.

Cons: Netscape users must manually configure proxy server and cache status; Java-based, so you take a performance hit.

$20 est. street price
PeakSoft
(888) 377-7325, (360) 752-1100
Enter 729 at
www.pccomputing.com/infolink

RATINGS: ☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE

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Keep Them Coming Back

Getting customers to visit your business's Web site the first time is easy. But for repeat traffic and referrals? You need just the right balance of splashy effects and useful information—and it has to load quickly too. Give yourself a head start with Geo Interactive Emblaze HotSpots and Emblaze WebCharger.

HotSpots makes building an interactive site easy. There's no programming to do, and you can add a multimedia image map that doesn't require a plug-in. When you've finished sprucing up your site with HotSpots, WebCharger compresses images to keep your response time snappy. Proceed with patience, though, because both tools have untraditional interfaces that make for steep learning curves.

Eye-catching These days, online images should be not only beautiful, but interactive as well. HotSpots helps you add sounds, links, and other multimedia to your images. The interface is highly unconventional and not particularly intuitive—there are no demo walk-throughs, no wizards, and no handy help files. You will need to read the manual to get started.

When you take the time to learn HotSpots, you can control what happens when a user clicks on or moves the cursor over a hot spot in your GIF or JPEG image. For example, you can select the exact shape that the cursor will assume, choose the media or event you want to trigger, and specify the URL you want it linked to. Plus you can add any combination of interactive events to as many as 50 areas of a graphic image.

With Emblaze WebCharger, you can compress 16-bit or 24-bit color images to 400 percent smaller than the smallest JPEGs online. The process is simple, but WebCharger's interface is not. There are inconsistently sized buttons along the edge of the screen next to an odd collection of switches and slides. But the buttons aren't labeled, so you have to turn on Tool Tips or bubble help—they don't appear by default.

Small Miracles It's easy to open graphics files (in JPEG, GIF, BMP, or PICT format) and set parameters. Just specify your target bandwidth speed (for example, 28.8Kbps, 33.6Kbps, or ISDN), then use control sliders to alter file quality, time to load, and file size. A photo starting out as a 900K file that takes 37 seconds to load at 28.8Kbps could be transformed into a 10K file that loads in only 3 seconds at the same speed. All files are saved in JPEG format.

Both Emblaze HotSpots and Emblaze WebCharger are relatively inexpensive at $100 each, but we'd like to see a discounted bundle of both, or a suite deal that includes all the products in the Emblaze line—neither of which Geo Interactive offers at this time. That said, HotSpots is a smart way to make your site interactive, followed by WebCharger to cut down on load time. JAMES OLIVER CURY

Get Noticed Make your Web site stand out—use Geo Interactive's Emblaze HotSpots (above) to animate your pages and Emblaze WebCharger to compress images for faster load and response.

A. Open any graphic file you like and zoom in or out.

B. Add a sound or a link to a particular HotSpot on your graphic.

C. See how long the image takes to download before you save the file.

Fast-forward Put the squeeze on oversize graphics. Emblaze WebCharger selectively compresses any part or parts of an image.

FILEBOX

Emblaze HotSpots

☆☆☆

Verdict: Make your site interactive without programming or plug-ins.

Pros: Adds interactive multimedia to Web sites; requires no coding skills or browser add-ins.

Cons: Unconventional interface; no demos or help files.

Competition: There are similar programs for adding multimedia to your site, such as Macromedia Shockwave Flash, but they cost more and require programming experience and plug-ins. NEC System Laboratory's AuraLine Multimedia Creation Kit is a lower-priced competitor at only $25, but it doesn't match all of HotSpots' effects.

$100 est. street price
Geo Interactive
(800) 576-7751, (818) 703-8436
Enter 731 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

Emblaze WebCharger

☆☆☆

Verdict: Powerful Web compression utility held back by an awkward interface.

Pros: High compression ratios; compatible with many file formats; selective compression.

Cons: Untraditional interface; doesn't save in GIF format.

Competition: Most image-editing programs, from low-end Jasc Software Paint Shop Pro to high-end Adobe Photoshop, include compression. But none includes all of WebCharger's powerful selection, estimation, and other features without requiring plug-ins.

$100 est. street price
Geo Interactive
(800) 576-7751, (818) 703-8436
Enter 732 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

RATINGS: ☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE

THE 19" MONITOR THE COMPETITION COULDN'T MAKE

SL90. MORE MONITOR. MORE WORK SPACE.

Introducing the SL90, the 19" class monitor with a 15" footprint. Panasonic made the space-saving design the competition could not produce. While other 19" class monitors have the depth of a 17", the SL90 is the first to fit comfortably in the space of a 15". The result, more working area on your screen *and* your desk!

But the SL90 doesn't stop short when it comes to performance. You still get incredible picture quality, up to 1600 x 1280 resolution and an eye-saving 95Hz refresh rate. Still tight on space? Panasonic also offers the SL70, a 17" class monitor with the footprint of a 14".

Model	SL90	SL70
Dot Pitch (mm)	0.25	0.27
Max. Res. (H x V)	1600 X 1280	1280 X 1024
H-Scan (kHz)	30 - 95	30 - 70
Viewable Area	18.0"	16.0"

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MN34-PC

Easy IP Management for NT

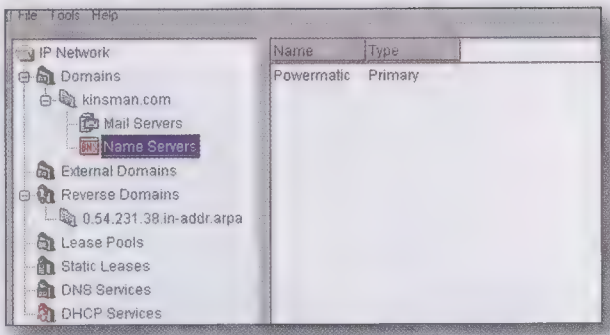
Give yourself a day off. You've earned it after installing MetaInfo's Meta IP 3.1—a smart Internet protocol manager. Meta IP makes short work of the arduous process of assigning and tracking IP addresses on a Windows NT network.

As your company grows and people come and go, manually assigning and tracking IP addresses can quickly become an administrative nightmare. Meta IP cuts the process down to size and goes beyond the basic IP features found in Microsoft Windows NT Server.

Meta IP includes two integrated servers. The first is a domain name system (DNS) server, which converts the string of numbers that make up an IP address to a name (such as www.zdnet.com) and vice versa. The second is a dynamic host configuration protocol server, which automatically assigns IP addresses to clients. Both servers are centrally managed from the Meta IP/Manager.

The IP/Manager makes quick work of installing and configuring the two integrated servers. Then you can view information from the IP/Manager about server status, active addresses, and name associations, and even troubleshoot and manage security.

Companies with fewer than 25 employees will probably find the rudimentary IP features included with Windows NT Server adequate. But MetaInfo Meta IP 3.1 can help ease the burden on network administrators for larger companies. CHRIS KINSMAN



NT Timesaver Stop wrestling with IP address assignments in Windows NT Server—you can automate the process with MetaInfo Meta IP 3.1.

FILEBOX

Meta IP 3.1

☆☆☆☆

Verdict: Smart IP manager for NT networks.

Pros: NT integration.

Cons: Could use more hand-holding wizards.

$995 for up to 25 clients, $350 for 100 additional clients, est. street prices
MetaInfo
(888) 638-2463, (206) 674-3700
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Visto Briefcase

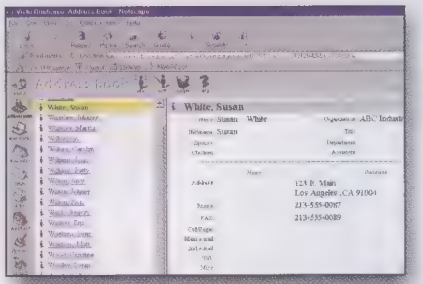
Remote Access Without the Baggage

You're in Seattle on business, but your desktop PC—with your important files—is in New York. Problem? Not if you have a remote access program like Visto Briefcase. For just $9.95 per month, it synchronizes your contacts, e-mail, and other files onto its Web site. From there, you can securely view and update them from any Java-enabled Web browser.

At the office, install Visto Assistant software to dial up and sync data from your desktop PC to the Visto Web site. You can then set the program to synchronize your data as often as you'd like, from once every few hours to once a day. Assistant is a free download from the Visto Web site, but it's a 6.6MB file so be prepared to wait.

Need your client's home phone number? Contacts from your PIM are displayed in the address interface, where you can view, add, or delete records through your browser. Briefcase supports Web bookmarks and POP3 e-mail, so you can check your e-mail as easily as you check your voice mail. As of this review, Visto was working on support for calendar and scheduling features. You can store up to 20MB of data on the Visto site, and each additional 10MB block of storage is $5 more per month.

For business travelers who need to view data on their desktop systems, Briefcase shows promise. But for full-blown remote access and remote control, stick with Traveling Software's LapLink 7.5 or Symantec's pcAnywhere32 8.0. WAYNE KAWAMOTO



Smart Attaché View, update, and synchronize data on your desktop via any Java-enabled Web browser with Visto Briefcase.

FILEBOX

Visto Briefcase

☆☆☆

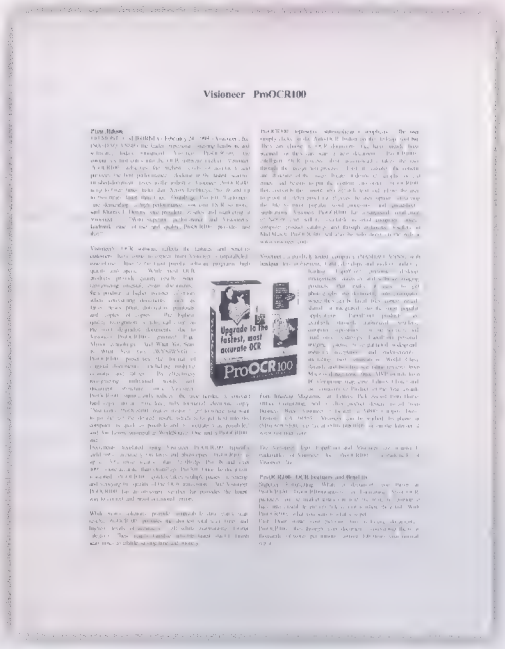
Verdict: Reach your desktop from afar via any browser.

Pros: Simple universal access to your files via the Internet.

Cons: Java-based, so performance is sluggish.

$9.95 per month for 20MB of storage, $5 per month for each additional 10MB of storage, $99.95 per year
Visto Corp., (650) 968-3878
Enter 734 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink

RATINGS: ☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE



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Xerox TextBridge®Pro	$79.00	52	X	X	X	X	X
Caere OmniPage®Pro	$499.00†	32	X	X	X	X	X

From the makers of award-winning PaperPort® scanners and software.

* As of April 14th, 1998.
** OCR times and accuracy based on Visioneer's internal testing of documents displayed in this advertisement.
† Non-Upgrade Version Pricing.

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Infolink 242 at: www.pccomputing.com/infolink

By Ron White

Dawn of DVD

For six months now, the DVD drive in my brand-new, state-of-the-art Pentium II has laid untouched, unsullied. Oh, not that desire was lacking. Who wouldn't be atingle at the thought of hours of full-screen video, days of audio, acres of text . . . all on a single, shining disc. But where were the DVD discs, engorged with software and data, waiting eagerly to possess my virgin drive, to rear back their heads and proclaim themselves . . . Conqueror of Multimedia? Nowhere—until now. A few sweet nothings whispered in the ears of certain PR people unzipped the first DVDs to be released, and a few are still under wraps. Finally DVD software has made its move. And the morning after, the union of DVD software and DVD hardware has left a song in my heart. But instead of "Sweet Mystery of Life," my heart's singing "Is That All There Is?"

Microsoft Encarta 98 DVD-ROM Reference Suite ●●●●●

If there's a killer app for DVD—one that justifies, all by itself, buying a DVD-ROM drive—this is it. Earlier versions of Encarta have consistently topped other multimedia software encyclopedias. The DVD expansion of Encarta into a suite gives the generalist the most information to be had on a computer disc. The suite includes Microsoft Bookshelf—itself the killer app for CD-ROM drives—Encarta Research Organizer (aka, My God, the Term Paper Is Due Tomorrow!), and an electronic atlas called Virtual Globe. DVD makes the suite easier to use since you don't have to shuffle discs—not that it couldn't still be easier. Microsoft used a brute-force method to create this suite: Simply shovel all the applications onto a single disc. It lacks true integration, which would let you compare information seamlessly linked in the encyclopedia, the atlas, and the dozen or so references in Bookshelf. While the MPEG videos are full screen at 640 by 480 pixels, the suite still has a way to go to fulfill the potential of DVD. But for now it's the one disc I'm most likely to keep in my DVD drive.

All in One **Microsoft's Encarta 98 has full-screen video, but it still just treads the surface of DVD's potential.**

Microsoft Encarta 98 DVD-ROM Reference Suite / Microsoft Corp. / (800) 426-9400, (425) 882-8080 / $129 est. street price / *Enter 651 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink*

Short Cinema Journal ●●●●●

This is a great use of DVD, but its intended audience is so elite that Short Cinema Journal isn't likely to explode the DVD-player market the way *Deep Throat* popularized the VCR. But the bimonthly collections of short films, animation, and interviews about moviemaking are musts for anyone who enjoys the kind of movies that aren't played at the local Hell Multiplex. Each DVD disc is created with MPEG-2 video and AC-3 sound, and includes about a dozen films that don't suck—including the ones you hear about only when they receive an Academy Award. One issue has *Some Folks Call It a Sling Blade*, a short film that's the precursor to *Sling Blade* and stars Molly Ringwald. Another issue has *La Jetée*, a short French film that inspired Terry Gilliam's *12 Monkeys*. DVD's ability to let you jump between films, listen to alternative music tracks, and display different film formats makes it a perfect marriage of subject and medium. You can use it on your home theater setup as well as your PC. Now don't ever complain to me again that there's nothing good on TV.

Short Cinema Journal / 2014 Corp. / (888) 383-6247, (310) 821-9843 / $20 per issue, est. street price; $60 one-year subscription (six issues) / *Enter 652 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink*

Ski World DVD ●●●

I guess we should expect a lot of DVD-ROMs like Warren Miller's Ski World. The only compelling reason to put this guide to skiing and resorts on DVD is to have room for scads of 640-by-480 videos of people schussing through the snow. The information on resort areas is general. And while there's a section on ski instructions, I have to wonder when in the opening video in the Beginner section, the first thing the instructor says is, "Next. . . ." Face it. This is a specialty CD-ROM that will appeal only to skiing fanatics imprisoned by the summer's heat and who will watch any video—any—of other people playing in the snow.

Warren Miller's Ski World DVD / Multimedia 2000 / (206) 622-5530 / $30 est. street price / *Enter 653 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink*

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID PERRY

RATINGS: ●●●●● OMNIMAX ●●●● CINEMASCOPE ●●● TECHNICOLOR ●● BLACK & WHITE ● SILENT MOVIES

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-Home Office Computing, September 1997

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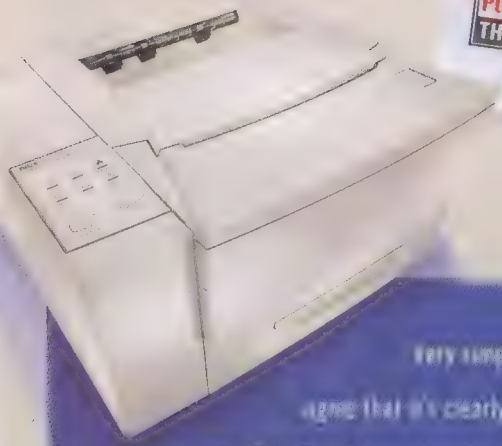
-Windows Sources, September 1997

"For a fast network printer, this is one of the best deals around."

-PC World, November 1997

The fat lady has sung, showered, changed and gone home.



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-PC Computing A List, since July 1997

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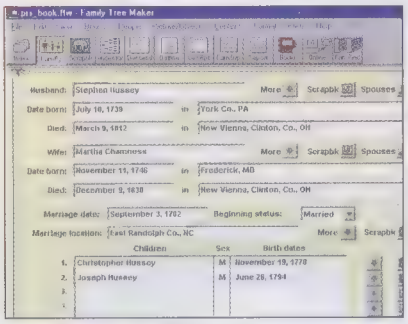
Infolink 235 at: www.pccomputing.com/infolink

Family Tree Maker ●●●●●

If there's any area where sheer volume is important all by itself, it's genealogy. Birth, marriage, and death records are so haphazard and scattered that digging up your roots usually means a lot of dusty, dry research. The nine-disc Family Tree Maker on CD-ROM has already taken much of the



It's All Relative **Trace your roots without a lot of digging using the expanded Family Tree Maker.**

cemetery and the county clerk's office out of genealogy. It contains roughly 100 Family Archives organized with census, social security, emigration, church, and other reports—at least one of which is going to mention your dead ancestors. (The trick is figuring out which of the 100 to buy from Broderbund at an average of 30 bucks a pop.) I viewed a beta of Tree Maker's DVD, and it's promising. The DVD version packs all the CDs onto one disc, with 23 of the Family Archives—4.5GB of data on 94 million names. Three more DVDs, tops, and you've pretty much got the entire universe of family trees. Family Tree Maker foretells a future benefit of DVD: It has the potential to make the price of delivering data so inexpensive that the quantity of data becomes immaterial. So, maybe it's not the ideal future when everything is on the Internet. But for the less-than-dedicated genealogist, it's a quantum blessing.

Family Tree Maker & Family Archive DVD Beta / Broderbund / (800) 474-8696, (415) 382-4770 / price not set / *Enter 654 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink*

The Complete National Geographic ●●●●●

National Geographic Interactive is a reminder that no disc, no matter how capacious, will ever be big enough for all our stuff. The prototype of the DVD version is still being pulled together. But it should wind up having all 31 discs that compose the CD-ROM edition of *National Geographic* shrink-wrapped onto four DVD-ROMs. That's 180,000 photos, 9,300 stories, and searchable text for every inch of every page, including advertisements, for 109 years of the armchair adventurer's favorite rag. Plus, a bunch of video from National Geographic's TV shows that aren't on the CD version.

The Complete National Geographic: 109 Years of the Magazine on DVD / Mindscape / (800) 234-3088, (415) 895-2000 / $179 est. street price / *Enter 655 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink*

AAA Map 'n' Go ●●●●

OK, so you have a new laptop with a DVD drive, and you just have to show it off. Then get AAA Map 'n' Go DVD DeLuxe. The DVD version doesn't provide much more than the CD-ROM of the mapping program. However, the DVD disc has as an extra 75 minutes of AAA travel videos. (Supply your own snide remark.) But really, is there anything left that DeLorme could possibly add? After all, it's got street-level maps for the entire country and information on 64,000 AAA listings for accommodations, restaurants, campgrounds, and attractions. But even if you could get most of it on CD-ROM, that's not the point. The point is, you want to show off your DVD-equipped laptop as you journey across six states. This is the way to do it.

AAA Map 'n' Go DVD DeLuxe / DeLorme / (800) 452-5931, (207) 846-7000 / $75 est. street price / *Enter 656 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink*

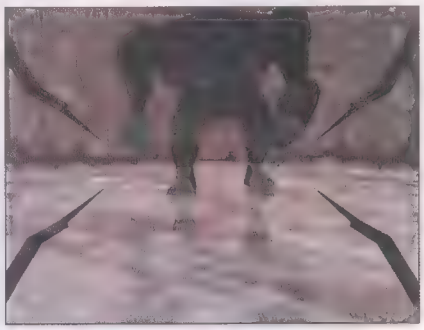
Dragon's Lair ●●

Here's proof that technology doesn't always equal progress. Dragon's Lair was a laserdisc arcade game back in 1983. DVD fits the game on a small disc, but doesn't make Dragon's Lair any less tedious than when it sucked up my quarters 15 years ago. The game is rendered in very decent 2-D animation. The trick in playing it is to press the right key at the right moment so the scene cuts to a sequence in which the knight hero survives some danger. Press the wrong key and you're penalized by being forced to watch the scene from the very beginning. And it doesn't help the playability of the game that nowhere could I find any guide to the controls. The only way I could influence the onscreen action was to slap my hands mindlessly on the keyboard until I accidentally hit the right key. Even with all that hand play, the ratio of action to tedium is about 1 to 10. Small children, who like seeing the same thing over and over again, might like Dragon's Lair. Anyone older than six should pass.

Dragon's Lair PC DVD-ROM / Digital Leisure / (888) 836-4383, (905) 888-9550 / $50 est. street price / *Enter 657 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink*

Shadow Master ●●●●

This isn't a DVD title, but it's instructive to look at it next to Dragon's Lair. Shadow Master, which is a Doom/Quake shoot-alike, shows how far animation has come since 1983. The animation in Dragon's Lair is created by a former Disney cartoonist, and it's well-done 2-D animation. But the artwork is deliberately simple and, well, cartoonish. When each frame is created by hand, simplicity is the only practical way to do it. Compare it with Shadow Master's 3-D artwork, based on the fantasy illustrations of '70s album-cover artist Rodney Matthews. Thanks to the miracle of bitmaps and real-time rendering, Shadow Master is permeated with realistic detail, lighting, shadows, and reflections that were impossible a few years ago. Maybe *realistic* isn't the word to use when the subject matter is mechanical spiders and *Alien*-like creatures firing death rays. But the illusion of realism is there, making



Golden Age of 3-D **Details like this reflection in Shadow Master show how far we've come in 3-D animation.**

Shadow Master more immersive than Dragon's Lair could ever be. These are the good old days of computer animation.

Shadow Master / Psygnosis / (800) 438-7794 / $49 est. street price / *Enter 658 at www.pccomputing.com/infolink*

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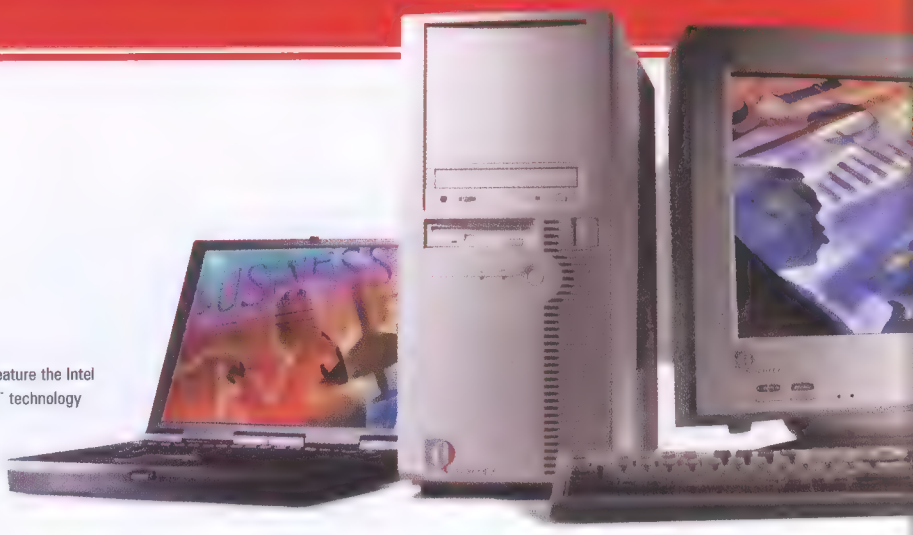

Quantex Business Notebooks feature the Intel Pentium® processor with MMX™ technology

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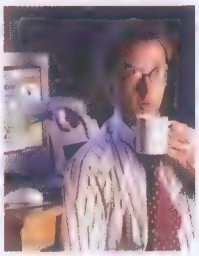

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Computer Shopper	PC Computing	Windows Magazine
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PC Magazine	**PC World**	**PC World**
Editors' Choice Award QP5/233 M-3 (12/97)	14 Best Buy Awards Oct '97 - May '98	Top 5 Notebooks Quantex H-1330 (05/98) Quantex H-1210 (04/98)
PC Computing	**PC Portables**	**C/Net Online**
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Windows Magazine, 8/97

Overall rankings
Technical Support Survey

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Windows Magazine, 8/97

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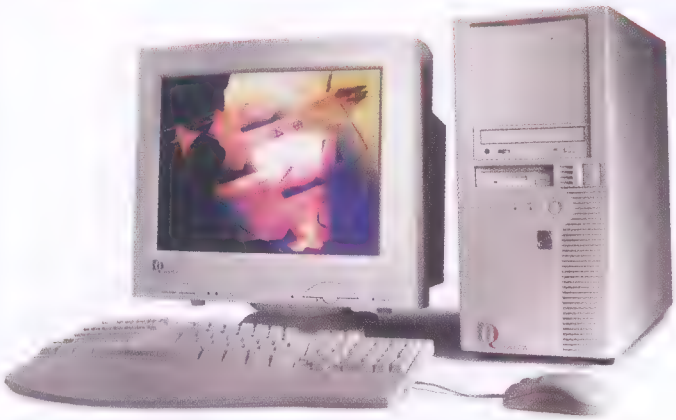
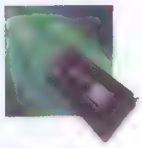


Processing power that gets down to business



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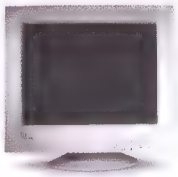

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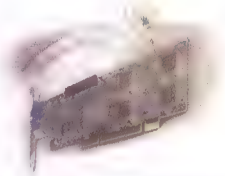

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- 24X Modular CD-ROM Drive
- PCI Bus with 128-bit graphics accelerator
- Integrated 16-bit Stereo Sound and Speakers
- Smart Lithium Ion Battery
- 2nd Lithium Ion Battery
- Mini-Docking Station
- USB and Fast IR Ports
- Integrated Personal Touchpad
- MS Windows 95 or Windows NT Workstation 4.0 *FREE* Upgrade to MS Windows 98*
- MS Office '97 Small Business Edition
- Carrying Case
- 3-year limited warranty on CPU and Main Memory
- 1-year parts and labor limited warranty on all other components

H-1411 w/Pentium II processor 233MHz $3099

Business Desktops

Options: • Internal 100MB Zip Drive with one cartridge...$79 • HP LaserJet 6L Printer...$379 • Business Audio Kit...$49 • APC Back-UPS 300...$99 • APC Back-UPS 500...$129 • APC Back-UPS 650...$199 • Seagate 4/8GB TR-4 Tape Backup...$199 • Seagate 10/20GB TR-5 Tape Backup...$299

QP5/233 SB-1 $1049

Business lease: $37/Mo.

- Pentium® Processor with MMX™ Technology 233MHz
- 2 Universal Serial Bus (USB) Ports / DMI 2.0
- 32MB SDRAM Memory / 512KB Pipelined Burst Cache
- 3.2GB Ultra-ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- 64-bit 3D Graphics Card with 4MB RDRAM
- 15" Digital Monitor (13.8" viewable)
- Intel Pro 100 PCI Ethernet Adapter w/RJ-45
- 32X Max EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Quantex Mid Tower Case
- 104-Key Keyboard with MS Mouse
- MS Windows 95/*FREE* Upgrade to MS Windows 98*
- 3-year limited warranty with 1-year On-Site Service*
- 24-hr./7-day Technical Support
- QSentry Technology (including Intel LANDesk Client Manager V.3.1)
- *Upgrade to Windows NT Workstation 4.0 for $99*

QP6/266 SB-1c (w/ Intel® Celeron™ processor). .$1099
QP6/266 SB-1 (w/ Pentium® II Processor). .$1199
QP6/300 SB-1 (w/ Pentium® II Processor). .$1299

QP6/266 SB-2 $1449

Business lease: $51/Mo.

- Pentium® II Processor 266MHz
- 2 Universal Serial Bus (USB) Ports / DMI 2.0
- 32MB SDRAM Memory / 512KB Secondary Cache
- 4.3GB Ultra ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Intel740™ AGP Graphics with 8MB SDRAM *Upgrade to 3D Labs Permedia 2 w/8MB SGRAM for $49*
- 17" Digital Monitor (15.8" viewable)
- Choice of Intel Pro 100 Ethernet Controller with Wake-On-LAN™ Technology or K56flex protocol Fax/Modem*
- 32X Max EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Quantex ATX Mid Tower Case
- 104-Key Keyboard with MS IntelliMouse
- MS Windows 95/*FREE* Upgrade to MS Windows 98*
- MS Office '97 Small Business Edition
- 3-year limited warranty with 1-year On-Site Service**
- 24-hr./7-day Technical Support
- QSentry Technology (including Intel LANDesk Client Manager V.3.1)
- *Upgrade to Windows NT Workstation 4.0 for $99*

QP6/266 SB-2c (w/ Intel® Celeron™ processor). .$1349
QP6/300 SB-2 (w/ Pentium® II Processor). .$1599
QP6/333 SB-2 (w/ Pentium® II Processor). .$1699

QP6/350 SB-3 $1999

Business lease: $70/Mo.

- Pentium® II Processor 350MHz
- 2 Universal Serial Bus (USB) Ports / DMI 2.0
- 64MB SDRAM Memory / 512KB Secondary Cache
- 6.4GB Ultra ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Intel740™ AGP Graphics with 8MB SDRAM *Upgrade to 3D Labs Permedia 2 w/8MB SGRAM for $49*
- 17" Digital Monitor w/NEC ChromaClear CRT (15.9" viewable; .25 dp; 1600x1200 max. resolution)
- Choice of Intel Pro 100 Ethernet Controller with Wake-On-LAN™ Technology or K56flex protocol Fax/Modem*
- 32X Max EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Quantex ATX Mid Tower Case
- 104-Key Keyboard with MS IntelliMouse
- MS Windows NT 4.0 Workstation
- MS Office '97 Small Business Edition
- 3-year limited warranty with 1-year On-Site Service**
- 24-hr./7-day Technical Support
- QSentry Technology (including Intel LANDesk Client Manager V.3.1)

QP6/300 SB-3 (w/ Pentium® II Processor). .$1749
QP6/333 SB-3 (w/ Pentium® II Processor). .$1849
QP6/400 SB-3 (w/ Pentium® II Processor). .$2199

QP6/400 SB-4 $2499

Business lease: $88/Mo.

- Pentium® II Processor 400MHz
- 2 Universal Serial Bus (USB) Ports / DMI 2.0
- 64MB SDRAM Memory / 512KB Secondary Cache
- 8.4GB Ultra ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- 3D Labs Permedia 2 AGP Graphics Card with 8MB SGRAM
- 19" Digital Monitor (18.1" viewable)
- Choice of Intel Pro 100 Ethernet Controller with Wake-On-LAN™ Technology or K56flex protocol Fax/Modem*
- 32X Max EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Quantex ATX Mid Tower Case
- 104-Key Keyboard with MS IntelliMouse
- MS Windows NT 4.0 Workstation
- MS Office '97 Small Business Edition
- 3-year limited warranty with 1-year On-Site Service**
- 24-hr./7-day Technical Support
- QSentry Technology (including Intel LANDesk Client Manager V.3.1)
- *Upgrade to Internal 100MB Zip Drive for $79*

QP6/300 SB-4 (w/ Pentium® II Processor) $1999
QP6/333 SB-4 (w/ Pentium® II Processor) $2099
QP6/350 SB-4 (w/ Pentium® II Processor) $2299

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Business Servers

QX5000 Server $2599

Pentium® II Processor 350MHz

Business lease: $91/Mo.

- Pentium® II Processor 350MHz (Dual-Processor Upgradable)
- 64MB 100MHz ECC SDRAM (1GB Max.) / 512KB L2 ECC Cache
- 32X Max EIDE CD-ROM Drive/3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- 4GB Ultra-Wide SCSI-3 Hot-Swappable Hard Drive
- Dual Channel Ultra-Wide & Narrow SCSI-3 Controller
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- Emergency Management Port
- 3-year limited warranty with 1-year On-Site Service**
- 24-hr./7-day Technical Support

QX5000 Server $4099

Pentium® II Processor 400MHz

Business lease: $134/Mo.

- Pentium® II Processor 400MHz (Dual-Processor Upgradable)
- 128MB 100MHz ECC SDRAM Memory
- 9.1GB Ultra-Wide SCSI-3 Hot-Swappable Hard Drive
- MS Windows NT Server 4.0 w/10 Client License

Small Business Server $3999

Business lease: $130/Mo.

- Pentium® II Processor 350MHz (Dual-Processor Upgradable)
- 512KB L2 ECC Cache
- 64MB 100MHz ECC SDRAM Memory (1GB Max.)
- 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- 4GB Ultra-Wide SCSI-3 Hard Drive (7200 rpm)
- 15" Digital Monitor (13.8" viewable)
- Dual Channel Ultra-Wide & Narrow SCSI-3 Controller
- 32X Max EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- K56flex protocol Fax/Modem*
- Intel EtherExpress Pro™ 100B Fast Ethernet w/RJ-45
- Server Tower Case
- 104-Key Keyboard with MS Mouse
- Microsoft® BackOffice® Small Business Server Suite
- 3-year limited warranty with 1-year On-Site Service**
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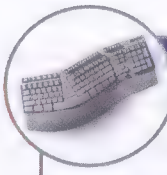

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Lease: $39/Mo.

- Pentium® Processor with MMX™ Technology 233MHz
- 32MB SDRAM Memory / 512KB Secondary Cache
- 3.2GB Ultra ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- 64-bit 3D Graphics Card with 4MB RDRAM
- 15" Digital Monitor (13.8" viewable)
- K56flex PCI Fax/Modem* w/Voice Mail and Speakerphone
- 32X Max EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Ensoniq 32-Bit Wavetable Sound Card
- Altec-Lansing ACS-90 Speakers
- Quantex Mid Tower Case
- 104-Key Keyboard with MS Mouse
- MS Windows 95/*FREE* Upgrade to MS Windows 98+
- Value Multimedia Software Bundle
- 3-year limited warranty with 1-year On-Site Service**

QP6/266 M-1c (w/ Intel® Celeron™ processor). $1149
QP6/266 M-1x (with Pentium II processor). $1199
QP6/300 M-1x (with Pentium II processor). $1299

QP6/300 M-2x $1499
Lease: $53/Mo.

- Pentium® II Processor 300MHz
- 32MB SDRAM Memory / 512KB Secondary Cache
- 4.3GB Ultra ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Toshiba MPACT2 3D Media Accelerator w/4MB RDRAM
- 17" Digital Monitor (15.8" viewable)
- *Upgrade to 17" Monitor w/NEC CromaClear CRT for $99*
- K56flex PCI Fax/Modem* w/Voice Mail and Speakerphone
- 2nd-Generation DVD-ROM Drive w/MPACT2 Decoding
- Ensoniq 32-Bit Wavetable Sound Card
- Altec-Lansing ACS-90 Speakers
- Quantex ATX Mid Tower Case
- 104-Key Keyboard with MS Mouse
- MS Windows 95/*FREE* Upgrade to MS Windows 98+
- Value Multimedia Software Bundle
- 3-year limited warranty with 1-year On-Site Service**

QP6/266 M-2x (with Pentium II processor). $1399
QP6/333 M-2x (with Pentium II processor). $1599
QP6/350 M-2x (with Pentium II processor). $1799

QP6/350 M-3x $1799
Lease: $63/Mo.

- Pentium® II Processor 350MHz
- 64MB SDRAM Memory / 512KB Secondary Cache
- 6.4GB Ultra ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Intel740™ AGP Graphics with 8MB SDRAM
- 17" Digital Monitor (15.8" viewable)
- *Upgrade to 17" Monitor w/NEC CromaClear CRT for $99*
- K56flex PCI Fax/Modem* w/Voice Mail and Speakerphone
- 32X Max EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Ensoniq 32-Bit Wavetable Sound Card
- Altec-Lansing ACS-90 Speakers
- Quantex ATX Mid Tower Case
- 104-Key Keyboard with MS Mouse
- MS Windows 95/*FREE* Upgrade to MS Windows 98+
- Value Multimedia Software Bundle
- 3-year limited warranty with 1-year On-Site Service**

QP6/266 M-3x (with Pentium II processor). $1449
QP6/300 M-3x (with Pentium II processor). $1549
QP6/333 M-3x (with Pentium II processor). $1649

QP6/400 M-4x $2349
Lease: $82/Mo.

- Pentium® II Processor 400MHz
- 64MB SDRAM Memory / 512KB Secondary Cache
- 8.4GB Ultra ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Intel740™ AGP Graphics with 8MB SDRAM
- 19" Digital Monitor (18.1" viewable)
- Internal 100MB Zip Drive with one cartridge
- K56flex PCI Fax/Modem* w/Voice Mail and Speakerphone
- 32X Max EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Ensoniq 32-Bit Wavetable Sound Card
- Altec-Lansing ACS-90 Speakers
- Quantex ATX Mid Tower Case
- 104-Key Keyboard with MS Mouse
- MS Windows 95/*FREE* Upgrade to MS Windows 98+
- Value Multimedia Software Bundle
- 3-year limited warranty with 1-year On-Site Service**

QP6/300 M-4X (with Pentium II processor). $1899
QP6/333 M-4X (with Pentium II processor). $1999
QP6/350 M-4X (with Pentium II processor). $2149

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QP6/266 SM-1c $1249
Lease: $44/Mo.

- Intel® Celeron™ Processor 266MHz
- 32MB SDRAM Memory
- 4.3GB Ultra ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Intel740™ AGP Graphics with 8MB SDRAM
- 15" Digital Monitor (13.8" viewable)
- K56flex PCI Fax/Modem* w/Voice Mail and Speakerphone
- 32X Max EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Ensoniq 32-Bit Wavetable Sound Card
- Altec-Lansing ACS-90 Speakers
- Quantex ATX Mid Tower Case
- 104-Key Keyboard with MS IntelliMouse
- MS Windows 95/*FREE* Upgrade to MS Windows 98+
- Power Multimedia Software Bundle
- Microsoft Office '97 Small Business Edition
- 3-year limited warranty with 1-year On-Site Service**

QP6/300 SM-1x (with Pentium II processor). $1449
QP6/333 SM-1x (with Pentium II processor). $1549
QP6/350 SM-1x (with Pentium II processor). $1699

QP6/300 SM-2x $1749
Lease: $61/Mo.

- Pentium® II Processor 300MHz
- 64MB SDRAM Memory / 512KB Secondary Cache
- 6.4GB Ultra ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Toshiba MPACT2 3D Media Accelerator w/8MB RDRAM
- 17" Digital Monitor (15.8" viewable)
- *Upgrade to 17" Monitor w/NEC CromaClear CRT for $99*
- K56flex PCI Fax/Modem* w/Voice Mail and Speakerphone
- 2nd-Generation DVD-ROM Drive w/MPACT2 Decoding
- Ensoniq 32-Bit Wavetable Sound Card
- Altec-Lansing ACS-45 Speakers with subwoofer
- Quantex ATX Mid Tower Case
- 104-Key Keyboard with MS IntelliMouse
- MS Windows 95/*FREE* Upgrade to MS Windows 98+
- Power Multimedia Software Bundle
- Microsoft Office '97 Small Business Edition
- 3-year limited warranty with 1-year On-Site Service**

QP6/266 SM-2x (with Pentium II processor). $1649
QP6/333 SM-2x (with Pentium II processor). $1849
QP6/350 SM-2x (with Pentium II processor). $1999

QP6/350 SM-3x $2049
Lease: $72/Mo.

- Pentium® II Processor 350MHz
- 64MB SDRAM Memory / 512KB Secondary Cache
- 8.4GB Ultra ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Intel740™ AGP Graphics with 8MB SDRAM
- 17" Digital Monitor w/NEC CromaClear CRT (15.9" viewable; .25 dp; 1600x1200 max. resolution)
- Internal 100MB Zip Drive with one cartridge
- K56flex PCI Fax/Modem* w/Voice Mail and Speakerphone
- 32X Max EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Ensoniq 32-Bit Wavetable Sound Card
- Altec-Lansing ACS-45 Speakers with subwoofer
- Quantex ATX Mid Tower Case
- 104-Key Keyboard with MS IntelliMouse
- MS Windows 95/*FREE* Upgrade to MS Windows 98+
- Power Multimedia Software Bundle
- Microsoft Office '97 Small Business Edition
- 3-year limited warranty with 1-year On-Site Service**

QP6/300 SM-3x (with Pentium II processor). $1799
QP6/333 SM-3x (with Pentium II processor). $1899
QP6/400 SM-3x (with Pentium II processor). $2249

QP6/400 SM-4x $2499
Lease: $88/Mo.

- Pentium® II Processor 400MHz
- 64MB SDRAM Memory / 512KB Secondary Cache
- 11.5GB Ultra ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Intel740™ AGP Graphics with 8MB SDRAM
- 19" Digital Monitor (18.1" viewable)
- K56flex PCI Fax/Modem* w/Voice Mail and Speakerphone
- 32X Max EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Ensoniq 32-Bit Wavetable Sound Card
- Altec-Lansing ACS-45 Speakers with subwoofer
- Quantex ATX Mid Tower Case
- 104-Key Keyboard with MS IntelliMouse
- MS Windows 95/*FREE* Upgrade to MS Windows 98+
- Power Multimedia Software Bundle
- Microsoft Office '97 Small Business Edition
- 3-year limited warranty with 1-year On-Site Service**
- *Upgrade to Internal 100MB Zip Drive for $79*

QP6/300 SM-4x (with Pentium II processor). $1999
QP6/333 SM-4x (with Pentium II processor). $2099
QP6/350 SM-4x (with Pentium II processor). $2249

Super Multimedia

QP6/350 M-4x SE $1999
Lease: $70/Mo.

- Pentium® II Processor 350MHz
- 64MB SDRAM Memory / 512KB Secondary Cache
- 6.4GB Ultra ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Toshiba MPACT2 3D Media Accelerator w/8MB RDRAM
- 17" Digital Monitor w/NEC CromaClear CRT (15.9" viewable; .25 dp; 1600x1200 max. resolution)
- Internal 100MB Zip Drive with one cartridge
- K56flex PCI Fax/Modem* w/Voice Mail and Speakerphone
- 2nd-Generation DVD-ROM Drive w/MPACT2 Decoding
- Ensoniq 32-Bit Wavetable Sound Card
- Altec-Lansing ACS-90 Speakers
- Quantex ATX Mid Tower Case
- 104-Key Keyboard with MS Mouse
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QP6/300 M-4X SE (with Pentium II processor). $1749
QP6/333 M-4X SE (with Pentium II processor). $1849
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QP6/400 SM-4x SE $2899
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- Pentium® II Processor 400MHz
- 128MB SDRAM Memory / 512KB Secondary Cache
- 11.5GB Ultra ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Intel740™ AGP Graphics with 8MB SDRAM
- 19" Digital Monitor (18.1" viewable)
- Internal 100MB Zip Drive with one cartridge
- K56flex PCI Fax/Modem* w/Voice Mail and Speakerphone
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- Pentium® II Processor 350MHz
- 64MB SDRAM Memory / 512KB Secondary Cache
- 6.4GB Ultra ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Toshiba MPACT2 3D Media Accelerator w/8MB RDRAM
- 19" Digital Monitor (18.1" viewable)
- K56flex PCI Fax/Modem* w/Voice Mail and Speakerphone
- 2nd-Generation DVD-ROM Drive w/MPACT2 Decoding
- Ensoniq 32-Bit Wavetable Sound Card
- Altec-Lansing ACS-90 Speakers
- Quantex ATX Mid Tower Case
- 104-Key Keyboard with MS Mouse
- MS Windows 95/*FREE* Upgrade to MS Windows 98+
- Value Multimedia Software Bundle
- 3-year limited warranty with 1-year On-Site Service**

SM-Series Best Buy $2549
Lease: $89/Mo.

- Pentium® II Processor 400MHz
- 64MB SDRAM Memory / 512KB Secondary Cache
- 8.4GB Ultra ATA HD / 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Toshiba MPACT2 3D Media Accelerator w/8MB RDRAM
- 19" Digital Monitor (18.1" viewable)
- 100MB Internal Zip Drive with one cartridge
- K56flex PCI Fax/Modem* w/Voice Mail and Speakerphone
- 2nd-Generation DVD-ROM Drive w/MPACT2 Decoding
- Ensoniq 32-Bit Wavetable Sound Card
- Altec-Lansing ACS-45 Speakers with subwoofer
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- PCMCIA K56flex protocol Fax/Modem*
- 24X Modular CD-ROM Drive
- PCI Bus with 128-bit graphics accelerator
- Integrated 16-bit Stereo Sound and Speakers
- Smart Lithium Ion Battery
- 2nd Lithium Ion Battery
- Mini-Docking Station
- USB and Fast IR Ports
- Integrated Personal Touchpad
- MS Windows 95 or Windows NT 4.0 Workstation
  FREE Upgrade to MS Windows 98+
- MS Office '97 Small Business Edition
- Carrying Case
- 3-year limited warranty on CPU and Main Memory
- 1-year parts and labor warranty on all other components

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Unlock amazing hidden features in Windows 98, Windows 95, and NT. You won't find them anywhere else!

UNDOCUMENTED Windows Secrets

By ED BOTT

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELIZABETH BRANDT

Internet Explorer 4.0 isn't just a Web browser; it's also a take-no-prisoners Windows upgrade. When you install IE4, it hijacks your desktop, overhauls the Start menu and Taskbar, replaces Windows Explorer and your Web browser, and redoes your dial-up connections.

Good luck finding information on how to cope with this stealth Windows upgrade, too. The all-new HTML-based help engine offers only the most basic hand-holding tips, and tracking down information in the online Microsoft Knowledge Base can be an exercise in frustration.

Think you can avoid IE4? Not likely. Although you have some options at setup time, Microsoft has done its best to package IE4 as an all-or-nothing upgrade. An increasing number of Microsoft applications, including Outlook 98 and the NT Option Pack, require that you install IE4. And if you're planning to move to Windows 98, the old Windows shell is gone and IE4 is in its place.

We've spent the past six months X-raying IE4 and Windows 98. We've figured out how to surgically remove the pieces you don't want or need and how to disable or fine-tune the Active Desktop. Our full report will appear in this year's 7th Annual Windows Superguide, due in October. But with Windows 98 just around the corner, we know you can't wait, so we've assembled this sneak preview of the best undocumented secrets—you won't find them anywhere else.

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Unclutter the Start menu, turn on Thumbnail view, and bring back Windows Explorer.

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Browse the Web from anywhere, streamline the Channel Bar, and stop nasty system crashes.

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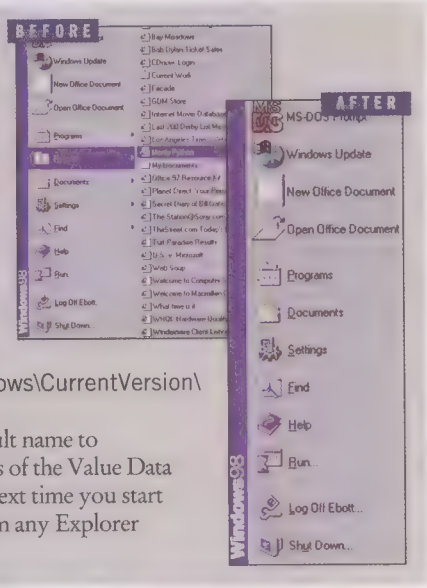
Can't-live-without insider tips, including Internet Explorer keyboard shortcuts and quick custom searches.

Clean Up After Windows

Every time NASA sends another space shuttle into orbit, the crew has to dodge 40 years of space junk. Every time you launch Windows, you have to steer clear of Microsoft's interface junk. IE4's Windows Desktop Update, which replaces the original Windows 95/NT4 shell, is a big improvement over its predecessor, but it's still far from perfect. Installing the new shell (an option in Windows 95 and NT4, mandatory in Windows 98) leaves a trail of unwanted interface elements on the desktop, the Start menu, and throughout the hierarchy of folders.

Fortunately, you don't need a *Star Wars*–style laser to blast interface junk away for good. A checkbox here and a Registry tweak there should be all you need to streamline the Windows+IE4 interface.

Unclutter the Start Menu



When you install IE4, it adds a cascading menu to the Start menu, letting you display the contents of your Favorites folder without opening a new window. But do you really need yet another cascading menu? If your Favorites folder is well stocked with shortcuts and subfolders, you'll find the new menu nearly unusable. Fortunately, a simple Registry hack lets you eliminate this usability blunder. Open the Registry Editor and navigate to the following key:
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer

Choose Edit, New, DWORD value. Change the default name to NoFavoritesMenu. Press Enter and change the contents of the Value Data to 1. Click on OK and close the Registry Editor. The next time you start Windows, the Favorites menu will still be available from any Explorer window, but you won't see it on the Start menu.

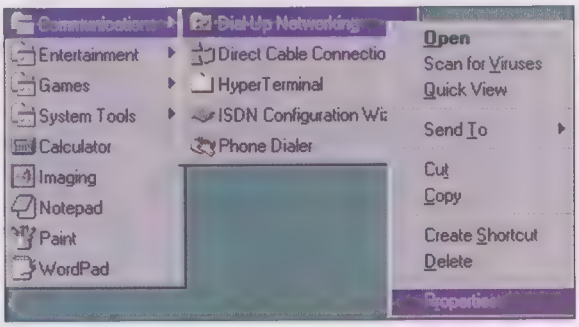
Rearrange Program Shortcuts

With IE4 installed, your Start menu looks exactly the same as before, but there's a crucial difference—you can rearrange program shortcuts by pointing, clicking, dragging, and dropping.

Drag any shortcut to move it to a new position on the Start menu (that's a big change from the original Windows 95 shell, which maintained all shortcuts in alphabetical order).

Right-click to display a pop-up menu that lets you cut, copy, delete, or change properties of any program shortcut.

Hold down the Ctrl key as you drag to copy a shortcut from the Programs menu—drop it on the Start button to add it to the top of the menu, or place it directly on the desktop or the Quick Launch bar.



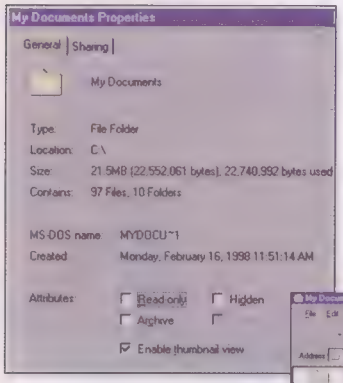
Restore the Old Explorer

The single Explorer window in IE4 lets you shift on the fly between Web pages and folder windows. Windows 98 users don't get a choice, but if you installed IE4 over Windows 95 or NT4, you can keep the new Web browser and restore the old Explorer for basic file management. Open Control Panel's Add/Remove Programs option and uninstall the Windows Desktop Update.

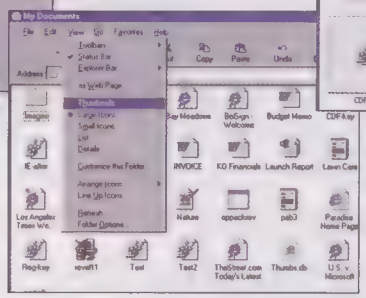
Get even more undocumented Windows secrets and insider tips at **WWW.PCCOMPUTING.COM**

Turn On Thumbnail View

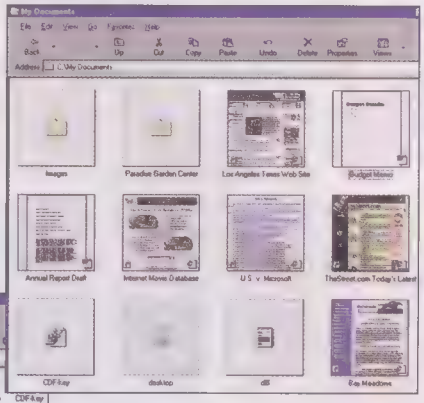
By default, Explorer's View menu lets you arrange icons in only four ways: Large Icons, Small Icons, List, or Details. You can, however, turn on a fifth view option called Thumbnails, which displays miniature images of graphics files, HTML documents, and other file types, directly in an Explorer window.



Step 1 You must specifically enable Thumbnails view on a folder-by-folder basis. Right-click on the folder icon and choose Properties. Check the box labeled Enable Thumbnail View, and then click on OK.

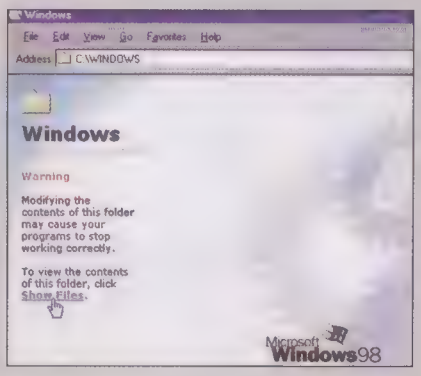


Step 2 Display the contents of the folder using Explorer. Pull down the View menu and choose Thumbnails. Note that you can't use the View As Web Page option with the Thumbnails view.



Step 3 The Thumbnails view displays miniature images of compatible file types (including some Office documents) in an Explorer window. If the file type doesn't support thumbnails, you'll simply see the icon.

Unlock the Windows Folder



Under Windows 98, the default Web view of the Windows and System folders displays an annoying warning that requires an extra click before you can view the folder's contents. To bypass this needless message, open the folder and delete or rename its custom Web view template, Folder.htt. (To see this hidden file, you may need to adjust Explorer's display options first: Choose View, Folder Options, click on the View tab, and check the Show All Files box under the Hidden Files option.)

Windows 98 also includes Web View templates for system objects that display in folder windows, such as My Computer and Dial-Up Networking. You'll find all these templates in the Windows\Web folder; delete any .htt files you don't want to use.

Lose the Log Off Prompt

Do you really need a Log Off <*Username*> command on the Start menu? If you're attached to a network, the answer is yes—logging off and back on helps you keep your network secure. But on a home machine, where logon dialog boxes simply slow you down, it's easy to get rid of. Start the Registry Editor and locate the following key:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer

Choose Edit, New, Binary Value. Name the new entry NoLogOff. Press Enter and set it to the following value:

01 00 00 00

Click on OK, close the Registry Editor, and restart to make the change take effect.

Tame the Active Desktop

Just what is the Active Desktop anyway? IE4's Channel Bar is the most visible sign of the Web-enabled desktop, but the content available via Active Channels is depressingly lame. And how much useful information is there on the Disney channel, or Warner Bros., or the other default channel icons?

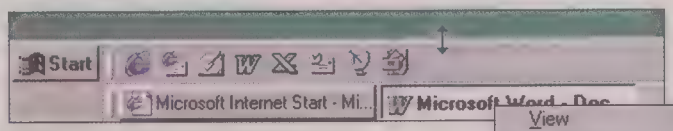
We dug deep into the guts of the Active Desktop and found some incredibly useful features. But you'll never know it if you stick with Microsoft's dopey default settings. Give the Channel Bar a makeover, and you might find it surprisingly useful. Better yet, take your own favorite sites and download only the pages you want, when you want them. Finally, get rid of that old wallpaper and turn your desktop into a digital photo gallery.

Disable AutoDial

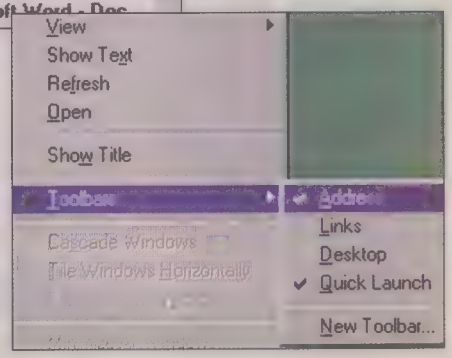
Does Windows sometimes try to dial your Internet service provider automatically? The cause might be a Web subscription that's set for automatic updates. To disable this annoying behavior, open a browser window and choose View, Internet Options. Click on the Advanced tab and clear the checkmark from the box labeled Enable Scheduled Subscription Updates.

Put the Address Bar on the Desktop

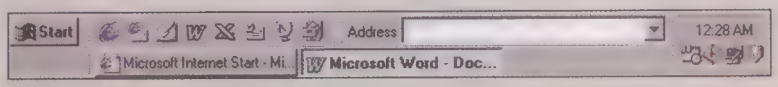
With IE4's Explorer, you can type just about anything in the browser's Address box—a URL to open a Web page, a network address to open a folder window, or a reserved name like Control Panel or My Computer. To make this capability available even when no Explorer window is open, add the Address toolbar to the desktop where it will always be visible.



Step 1 Point to the top edge of the Taskbar until the pointer turns into a two-headed arrow, then drag up to make the Taskbar two rows deep.



Step 2 Right-click on any empty space to display the Taskbar's shortcut menu. Point to Toolbars, then choose Address from the cascading menu. A checkmark lets you know you've selected the new toolbar.



Step 3 Click on the Address label; when the pointer turns to a four-headed arrow, drag the toolbar to the position you prefer. Click on the sizing handle (the vertical line to the left of the toolbar) to change the width of the bar.

There's more where these came from at WWW.PCCOMPUTING.COM

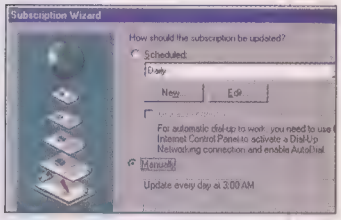
Reset the Channel Bar

How should you deal with IE4's ugly, oversize, and nearly useless Channel Bar? Our suggestion: Use it or lose it.

To give the Channel Bar a usability makeover, right-click on unwanted channel icons to delete them. Drag icons for subscribed channels out of their categories and onto the main bar, then delete the unneeded category icons. Finally, grab the sizing handles on the sides of the Channel Bar and reshape it to the dimensions you prefer—channel icons will move automatically.

To remove the Channel Bar, open the Control Panel's Display option. Click on the Web tab, select the Internet Explorer Channel Bar entry from the list of Active Desktop items, and click on Delete.

Browse at Top Speed



Are you frustrated when browsing a favorite site whose linked pages are painfully slow to load? Use IE4's subscription capabilities to speed up viewing. Open the page that contains the slow links (it doesn't have to be the site's home page), and drag its icon from the Address box to the desktop to create an Internet shortcut. Point to the shortcut, right-click, and choose Subscribe. Click on the Customize button, then follow the wizard's prompts to download linked pages one page deep, updating the subscription manually. To load the pages into your browser's cache, right-click on the shortcut icon and choose Update Now. Let IE4 download the pages while you do something else, then choose File, Work Offline, and open the page to browse at top speed.

Build a Wall Between Your Browser And Your Desktop

Using the Windows Desktop Update can give rogue Web pages an unsettling power over the rest of your system. When the Web browser hangs or crashes, your shell will crash, too, locking up the desktop and forcing you to reboot. If you have sufficient system resources (32MB minimum RAM, 64MB preferred for Windows 95 and 98, and 64MB minimum for NT), tell Windows to keep the shell and browser separate. Open the Web browser, choose View, Internet Options, click on the Advanced tab, and check the box labeled Browse in a New Process. Click on OK to close the dialog box, then restart the computer to make the change effective.

Create a Wallpaper Gallery

Windows 95 and NT4 limit your wallpaper options. You get only one graphic, and you have to center it on the desktop or tile the image. But IE4's Active Desktop lets you add multiple graphic images anywhere on the desktop.

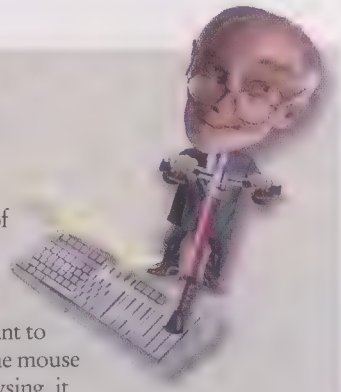
To add a new image, right-click on the desktop, then choose Active Desktop, Customize My Desktop. (Make sure the View As Web Page option is checked.) Click on the New button and say no when asked if you want to visit the Active Desktop Gallery. Enter the full name and path of the image file, or use the Browse button to pick from a folder window. Repeat to add other images, then click on OK to close the dialog box.

Turbocharge Your Browser

IE4 is the best Web browser we've ever used. Period. It's fast, flexible, and eminently usable—and we'll bet you haven't even scratched the surface of this powerful tool. For example, did you know there's a single keystroke that zooms the Explorer window to full-screen view, hiding menus, borders, and even the Windows Taskbar so you can view a page unobstructed? (Hint: It's F11.) Have you figured out the secret that lets you launch a Web search from anywhere—even if your browser isn't open? And have you replaced Microsoft's collection of self-serving buttons on the Links bar with one-click shortcuts to your own favorite Web sites?

This collection of simple tweaks, add-ins, and workarounds will help you uncover all those hidden features and more, so you can browse at maximum speed.

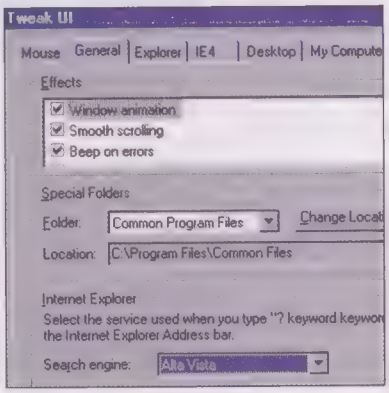
IE4 Keyboard Shortcuts



Internet Explorer 4.0 is one of the most keyboard-friendly Windows programs ever written. If you're a touch typist, or if you just don't want to switch constantly between the mouse and the keyboard when browsing, it helps to master a few shortcuts. Here are some of our favorites:

Backspace	Go to previous page
Ctrl-O	Open new location (Web page or folder)
Ctrl-N	Open new browser window
Tab/Shift-Tab	Jump to next/previous link on Web page
F5	Refresh current page
F6	Switch focus between Address bar, Links bar, and browser window
F11	Toggle between full-screen view and normal view

Quick Custom Searches

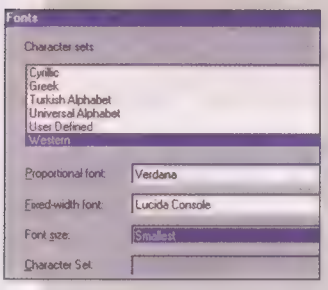


What's the absolute, hands-down fastest way to launch an Internet search? Click in the Address box, then type a question mark and a space followed by the terms you want to search for. When you press Enter, IE4 sends the request to Yahoo, the default AutoSearch engine. It's easy to change the default search engine if you've installed TweakUI from the Windows 95 or Windows 98 Power Toys collection. Open TweakUI, click on the General tab, and choose your preferred search engine from the 12 available choices on the drop-down list, including AltaVista, HotBot, Excite, and Infoseek.

Control Your Cache

As you view Web pages, Internet Explorer stores a copy of each downloaded object—Web pages, graphics, ActiveX controls, and so on—in the Temporary Internet Files folder. When you click on the Work Offline option, IE4 retrieves the pages from this cache and loads the cached page instantly. When the cache fills up, Windows should discard the oldest files to make way for new entries, right? In theory, yes, but IE4 doesn't work that way: The cache can behave erratically, keeping some of the oldest cached pages and discarding recently added files. Microsoft doesn't offer an official cure yet, but there's a third-party utility that helps manage the cache properly. You'll find a full explanation of the problem and a downloadable copy of CacheSentry for Internet Explorer at Enigmatic Software's Web site: www.mindspring.com/~dpoch/enigmatic.

Sticky Fonts



You can use the Fonts choice on IE4's View menu to adjust the default font size for the current session, but IE4 reverts to the default Medium choice the next time you use the browser. Want to change fonts permanently? Choose View, Internet Options; click on the General tab; and click on the Fonts button. IE4 will use the fonts and sizes you select here for all sessions.

Keep Secure Pages Secure

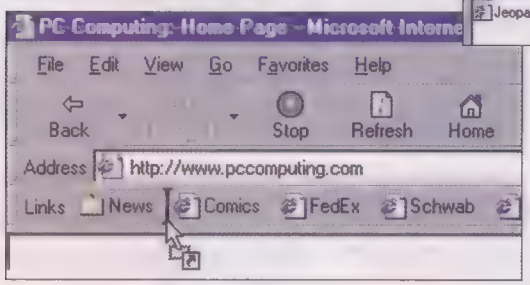
If you use the Web to access bank accounts, online stock trading systems, or other sensitive information, IE4 might be saving information that you'd rather keep private. Fortunately, you can set an IE4 option that prevents it from caching any page you download via a secure connection. Choose View, Internet Options, click on the Advanced tab, and check the box labeled Do Not Save Encrypted Pages to Disk. The change is immediate.

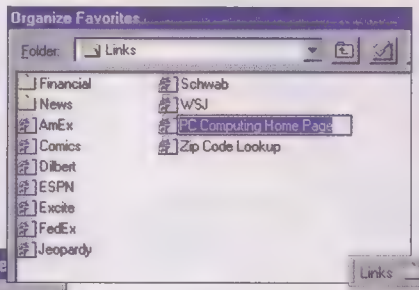
With this option enabled, you may find you're unable to download files from secure sites, with IE4 complaining that your security settings don't let you retrieve the file you clicked on. If you encounter this problem, use a different security option. Follow the procedures listed above, but check the box labeled Delete Saved Pages When Browser Closed. IE4 will keep a copy of secure pages (those whose URL begins with https://) in your cache; it will flush the cached secure pages when you exit IE4.

Customize Links Bars

IE4's Links bar is a perfect way to keep your favorite Web sites a click away. If this row of buttons isn't visible, right-click on the IE4 toolbar and click on Links from the shortcut menu. Don't waste space with the default buttons, either—replace them with your own links to speed up Web surfing. Although there's no limit to the number of shortcuts you can create, adding too many will scroll the toolbar off the screen, defeating its purpose.

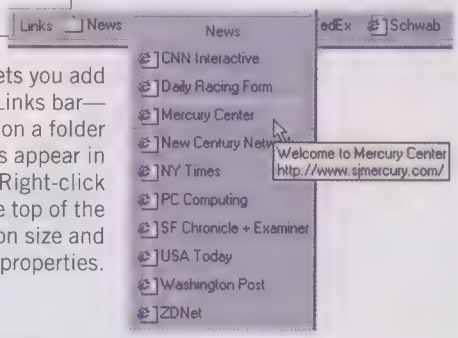
Step 1 To clear away the default buttons, right-click on each button and choose Delete from the shortcut menu. To add the current page to the Links bar, drag its icon from the Address box.





Step 2 To make the most of this one-row toolbar, keep each shortcut's label as brief as possible. To rename a shortcut on the Links bar, choose Favorites, Organize Favorites, then double-click on the Links folder and highlight the name.

Step 3 IE4 lets you add folders to the Links bar—when you click on a folder icon, the contents appear in a drop-down list. Right-click on the title at the top of the list to adjust icon size and other properties.



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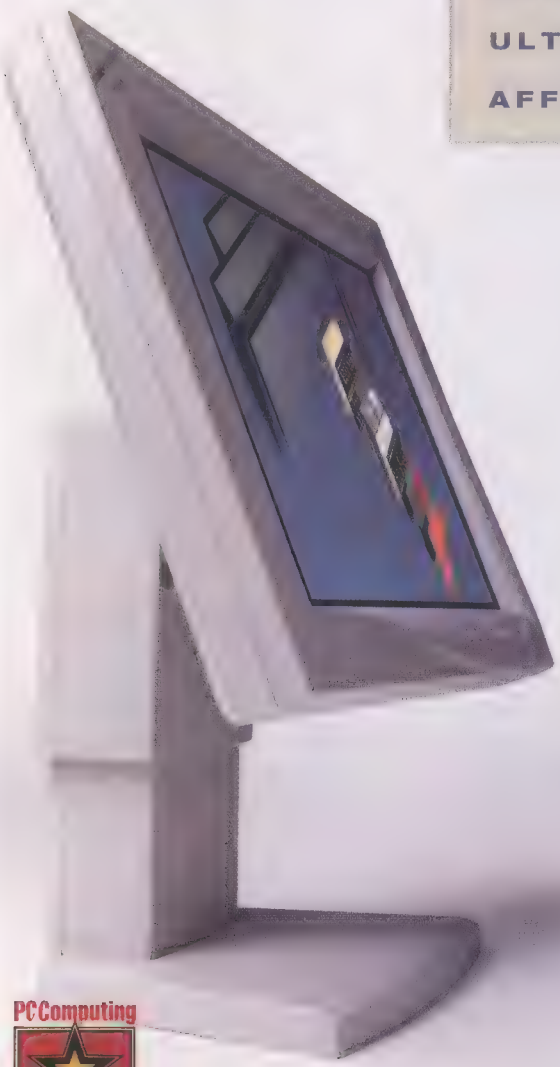


PCComputing BEST

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERNIE FRIEDLANDER

Some things aren't meant to be flat—tires, jokes, beer, the line on your electrocardiogram. But your monitor isn't one of them. Flat-panel desktop displays are arriving in force, and they cost what 17-inch monitors did just a few years ago. Is it time to toss your bulky CRT monitor for a space-saving LCD? After all, LCDs draw less energy than traditional monitors, they take up less space, and they don't emit potentially harmful radiation. Plus they're flicker free, which means no more aching eyes.

To find out whether flat panels really make sense for today's desktops, we tested 20 active-matrix displays that range in size from 14 to 16 inches.

FLAT-OUT Amazing

BY JULIE POLITO

Value Leader At $1,399, Akia's Radiance VX145 is a skinny bargain. Testers also gave this 14.5-inch display high marks for text quality.

In addition to evaluating them in our Performance Labs, we recruited a group of experienced Windows users to jury-test each LCD. Using Sonera Technologies' DisplayMate, a flat panel testing utility—and with the make and model of each display concealed—our testers scrutinized color quality, text sharpness, brightness, and contrast. They compared each flat-panel display with our choice for best 19-inch CRT monitor, Sony's Multiscan GDM-400PS (see "Live Large," May, page 215). Testers also adjusted monitor controls, evaluated extra features like swiveling bases or built-in speakers, and critiqued the overall design. They found some true winners, some notable pluses, and some stragglers. But mostly they found that flat panels have come a long way in just a short time.

Last year's flat-panel displays—even those that weren't large enough or bright enough to compete with your CRT—started at $2,000 and took a sharp turn upward from there. Monitor makers are finally taking flat panels seriously. You should too. This year's models are brighter, bigger, and more affordable than ever—many of them are priced well under $2,000. At this rate, it may not be long before all desktop monitors are flat. But whether that time has come for you depends on your needs. And yes, it still depends on your budget.

Lost in Space A superskinny LCD screen adds a dash of high-tech style to your desktop. But that's probably not good enough to convince the budget hawks that you need one. Fortunately, there are plenty of practical reasons to own a flat panel. Take size, for example. Slim screens are less than half as deep as a typical 17-inch CRT monitor, which frees up an enormous amount of room on your desktop. Some tiny workspaces can't handle a 17-inch monitor, let alone one that's larger. But a 15- to 20-inch flat panel fits nicely in the same real estate.

Flat-panel displays save more than just space. They consume less energy than conventional monitors (although CRT manufacturers are working to develop more efficient models), and they emit zero heat. As a result, office energy bills go down overall (see "Calculating ROI: Flat-Panel Payback," below). What's more, flat panels don't emit potentially harmful electromagnetic radiation or suffer from the resulting quirks that CRT monitors do, which makes them big favorites in radiation-sensitive environments like hospitals.

Flat panels have aesthetic perks too. Their flicker-free screens are easier on your eyes, and since they lack the curvature of CRT screens, you can make the most of your Windows desktop—the picture extends to the far corners of the screen. A 15-inch flat panel may sound shrimpy, but it gives you nearly as much room onscreen as a 17-inch CRT, for the same reason. Many flat panels also sweeten the deal with conveniences like built-in speakers, swiveling bases, and USB ports.

Calculating ROI

Flat-Panel Payback

Your mind is made up. You want a flat-panel LCD screen on your desk—yesterday. But that doesn't mean the bean counters will be convinced. Where's the payback on a flat panel—which can cost twice as much as a 17-inch CRT? LCDs save you more than just space.

Calculating return on investment (ROI) for LCD screens is tricky. The real payoff shows up in lower energy costs and space savings. LCD screens use less power than CRTs, thanks in part to their beginnings in mobile computing.

Unlike flat-panel displays, CRT monitors suck up a lot of power because they must heat an electrode until electrons begin to boil off it at a frantic pace—which is why the back of your CRT is warm to the touch. Flat panels use up to one-third less power than CRTs, which translates into a potential savings of up to $55 per year per monitor on your electric bill, depending on your local rate. That doesn't sound like a lot, but as you replace more CRTs with flat panels, the discount multiplies: That's a savings of $2,750 on 50 LCDs, and an impressive $11,000 on 200 skinny screens.

Slim Savers A recent study that looked at flat panel ROI for a British financial company concluded that overall office energy consumption could be reduced by up to 15 percent. If your business's electric bill is $1,000 per month, you could save $150—a total savings of $1,800 by year's end, enough money to buy the winning NEC MultiSync LCD1510. And since flat screens don't give off heat, large companies can expect their cooling bills to drop too.

The other major savings with flat panels is space. For most offices, trading each person's CRT for a flat panel will simply result in more desktop real estate.

Dark Side So what's not to like about flat panels? For all their good points, they're just not as bright as CRT monitors. And over time they get darker, as the bulbs that illuminate the LCD crystals emit less light. Manufacturers are gradually introducing longer-lasting bulbs, but if you buy a flat panel today expecting it to last a lifetime, you may find yourself shopping again in three to five years.

Also, flicker-free images don't mean the end of squinting. While top-quality 17-inch CRTs boast dot pitches in the 0.26mm range—producing razor-sharp text—similar-size flat panels top out at 0.28mm to 0.30mm. This translates to fuzzier text and, over time, eyestrain. LCDs also have a fixed resolution, usually 1,024 by 768 dpi, and limited viewing angles.

Prices for flat screens are falling, thanks to lower manufacturing costs. But they're still not as affordable as conventional monitors. The same $1,500 that you spend on a 15-inch flat screen could buy you a good 21-inch CRT monitor, or even two 17-inch models.

Then there's the question of technology. Flat-panel displays come in a few flavors. Most displays use active-matrix LCD technology, which has the best mix of high quality and low manufacturing costs. Dual-scan passive-matrix LCD panels are less expensive, but the trade-off is poor image quality and dimmer screens. Another technology, gas plasma, is brighter, lighter, and simpler to make, but it's more expensive to produce. It's found more in screens that are 42 inches or larger. However, if demand goes up significantly, gas plasma could eventually overtake active matrix.

To the Letter **Testers applauded the Sony Multiscan CPD-L150's crisp, dark text. They also liked its design, which allows for variable height and tilt.**

Flat and Fantastic The top of our flat-panel heap includes many of the usual suspects, and also a few surprises. The overwhelming favorite among jury testers was NEC's MultiSync LCD1510, a preproduction unit, no less. Testers loved its generous 15-inch screen and its rotating, tilting pedestal, but it was the display quality that really won them over. While the LCD1510 may look flat, its images are anything but. Colors are deep, and text appears sharp and clear. This flat panel held its own against our test CRT, too, with comparable quality in a much lighter package. At $1,799, the LCD1510 isn't far from the priciest monitor in our roundup. Eizo Nanao's FlexScan L34, which has brilliant colors and a wide viewing angle, costs a staggering $2,999.

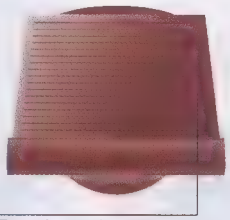
If the MultiSync LCD1510's price is still too steep, check out another display that won raves from testers. Iiyama's 14.1-inch ProLite 36 has CRT-quality text and images but costs an amazing $998. Akia's Radiance VX145, a 14.5-incher, also fared well in our tests, with the sharpest text of the bunch and a bigger screen than the Iiyama for just $1,399. It's the best buy for bargain shoppers.

For about the same price, you can get the $1,499

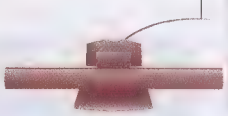
But what if your business expands? The study also shows that 24 percent more employees fit into the same office space (a trading floor) using LCD monitors instead of CRTs.

When you start from scratch with smaller, shallower desks, the savings on furniture boosts the overall ROI even more. For example, a modular desk that includes a corner piece (to accommodate the depth of a CRT) plus a short, straight piece could easily cost you $900. Skip the corner piece, and you'll save yourself $550—an amount equal to 30 percent of the purchase price of a typical flat-panel display.

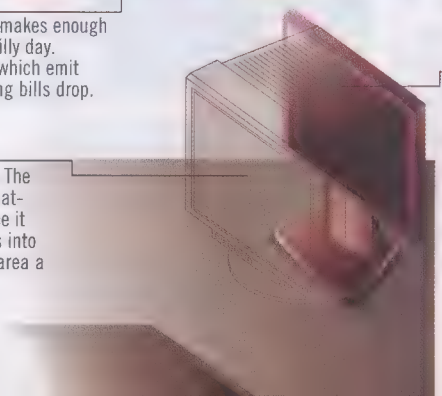
Savings All Around



Cool Down A CRT monitor makes enough heat to warm your hands on a chilly day. Replace CRTs with flat panels—which emit zero heat—and watch your cooling bills drop.



Economy Power You'll spend more to buy one, but on average, an LCD screen uses only one-quarter to one-third the amount of power a CRT requires.



Room to Spare The obvious advantage of a flat-panel display is the space it saves. A 15-inch LCD fits into about 40 percent of the area a 17-inch CRT takes up.

Eye Savers Active-matrix LCD screens emit no radiation and are flicker free—so they're much easier on the eyes than CRTs. Less eyestrain means productivity gains and employee satisfaction.

Dell 1400FP Monitor, which has straightforward controls and great color but measures only 14.1 inches. The Dell 1400FP's bright picture is no surprise: Underneath the Dell plastic is an NEC display. Testers also raved about the $1,999 Sony Multiscan CPD-L150's sharp, clean text, but wished its colors were brighter.

Honorable Mention A few of the monitors didn't win testers' unanimous applause but did offer some noteworthy features. At an affordable $1,699 the Samsung SyncMaster 500TFT has a generous screen, keen design, and built-in speakers, plus it's USB-ready. On the downside, its picture quality doesn't measure up to the competition's. IBM's 9516 Color Flat Panel gets major points for design with its black bezel and sleek buttons, and at 16.1 inches it's the largest screen in our roundup. But the $2,229 display suffers from serious text shadowing and visible flicker. Nokia's $1,949 500Xa—a preproduction unit—has a similar flicker problem, although its overall display quality put it among the top contenders. Testers also liked the Compaq TFT500's design, three USB ports, and intuitive onscreen controls, but for $2,499 its text should be sharper. For a slightly smaller view—but substantial savings—consider Compaq's $1,599 TFT450, a 14.5-inch LCD screen. Finally, there's the 14-inch ViewSonic VP140, which has an enticing price of $1,145. But its display suffers from streaking and poor text quality.

With so many low-cost performers in this group, last year's prices just don't cut it. Eizo Nanao's $2,999 FlexScan L34 and Panasonic's $2,799 PanaFlat LC40 compare nicely with other flat panels and our test CRT, but that doesn't justify their hefty price tags. And we'd send some of the displays back to the drawing board altogether. Sceptre's $999 FT15G has a generous screen and a rock-bottom price, but substandard image quality. And Philips' $1,899 Brilliance 4500AX has murky colors, fuzzy text, and cryptic advanced controls.

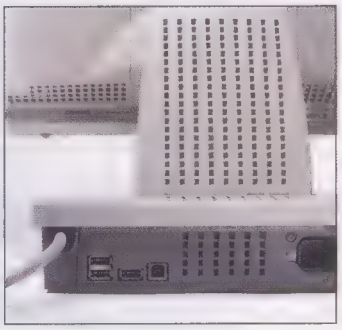
Style King IBM's 9516 Color Flat Panel wowed testers with its sleek bezel and expansive 16.1-inch screen. Too bad its image quality didn't measure up.

Skinny and Sweet On the whole, these flat-panel displays look better than their predecessors. Images are brighter, colors are deeper, and overall designs are more flexible. If spending $1,799 on NEC's MultiSync LCD1510 doesn't make your heart skip a beat, you can replace your CRT with this superb flat screen and be perfectly happy. That is, until 18-inch flat panels arrive early next year—but that's another story.

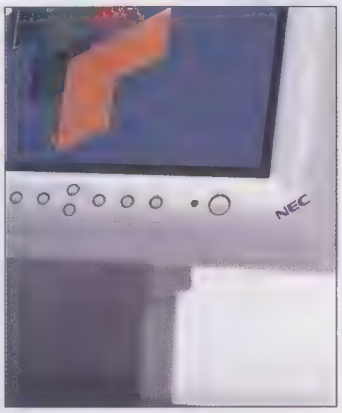
Usability Close-ups

Hands-on LCD Tests

Switching from a CRT monitor to a flat-panel display may take some getting used to. And no doubt you'll have to adjust its settings, particularly brightness and contrast. Extra features—like USB ports—also make life easier.



Give Me USB The Compaq TFT500 is USB-ready—with three ports for a keyboard, mouse, and other devices.

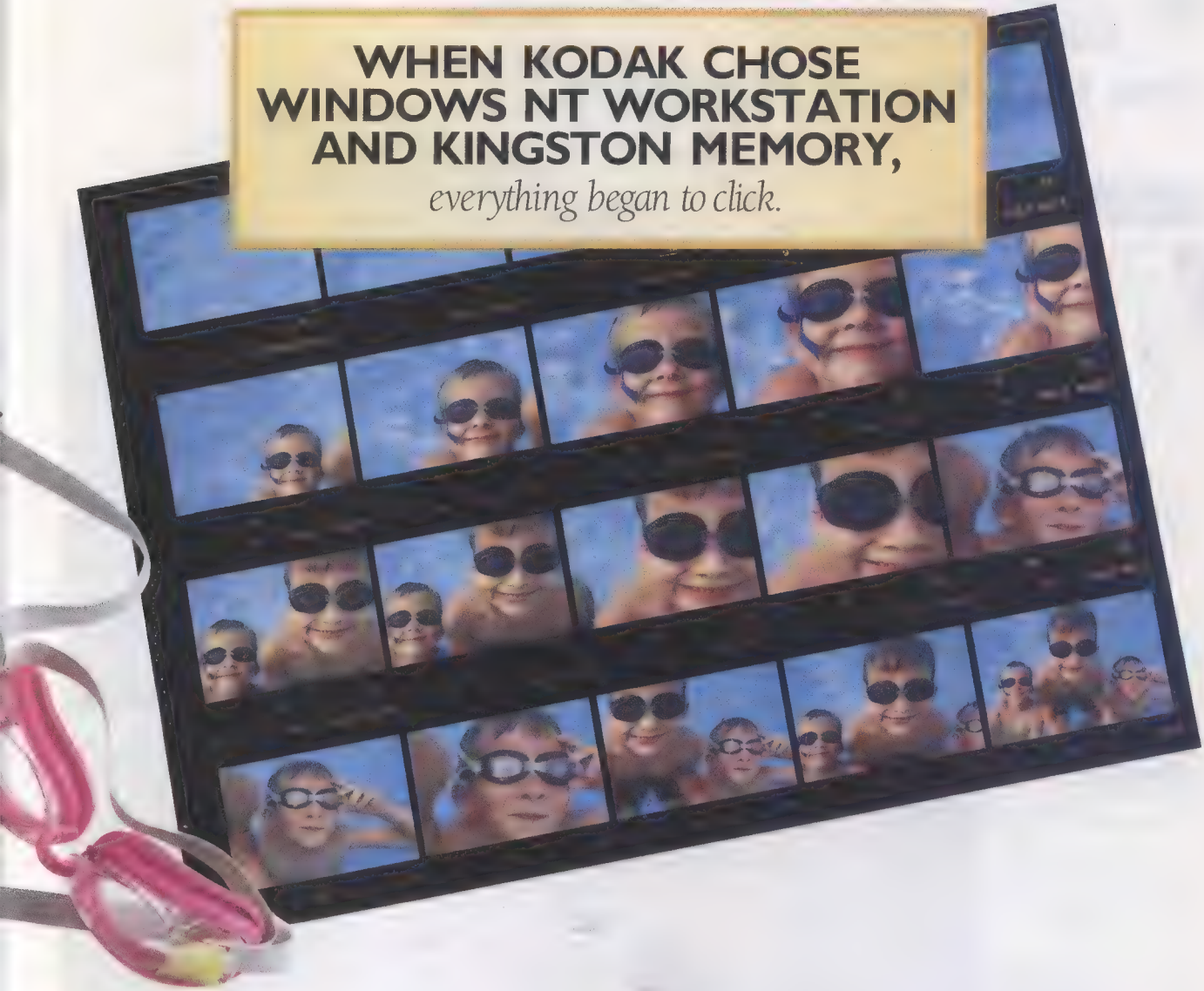


Take Control Testers couldn't keep their hands off the NEC MultiSync LCD1510's powerful controls. The auto-adjust feature made choosing settings a snap.

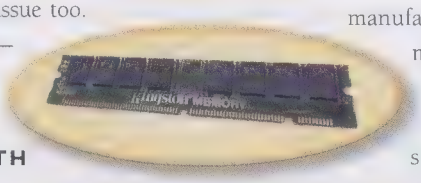
Open Sesame The pull-down door on the HP 1024 14" Liquid Crystal Display made testers work too hard to get to the advanced controls.

WHEN KODAK CHOSE WINDOWS NT WORKSTATION AND KINGSTON MEMORY,

everything began to click.



1 KODAK LOOKED AT ALL THE OPTIONS. But how many operating systems would you trust with 45,000 users? Stability and reliability were Kodak's first priorities. But because their networks are scattered all around the globe, security was a big issue too. In the end, the decision was easy—Microsoft® Windows NT™ Workstation 4.0.



2 NEXT, THEY UPGRADED BOTH NEW AND EXISTING PCS WITH KINGSTON MEMORY. That allowed them to expose all the best features of Windows NT Workstation. Users experienced an increase in performance. And thanks to Kingston's reliability and compatibility, the transition was smooth for network administrators. Putting ample memory on every desktop also helped lay the groundwork for the future.

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Top Flat-Panel Monitors

PRODUCT*	Price**	Display Size	Max. Resolution/ Aspect Ratio	Pros	Cons	Verdict
PC Computing BEST **NEC Technologies MultiSync LCD1510** (800) 632-4636 *InfoLink No. 612*	**$1,799**	15 inches	1,024 by 768 at 75Hz/ 4 by 3 or 3 by 4	Dazzling images and text; display rotates for landscape or portrait view.	Still pricier than equivalent CRTs.	☆☆☆☆☆ **Thin *and* gorgeous—how can we refuse?**
Akia Corp. Radiance VX145 (800) 936-5481 *InfoLink No. 613*	**$1,399**	14.5 inches	1,024 by 768 at 95Hz/ 4 by 3	Attractive price; excellent text quality.	Awkward controls; narrow viewing angle.	☆☆☆☆ **Please your eyes and your purchasing manager.**
Compaq Computer Corp. TFT500 (800) 345-1518 *InfoLink No. 614*	**$2,499**	15 inches	1,024 by 768 at 60Hz/ 4 by 3	Smart controls; deep colors; eye-saving antiglare screen; wide viewing angle; USB-ready.	Fuzzy text; pricey.	☆☆☆☆ **You'll like the view—but you'd like it more if it cost less.**
Dell Computer Corp. Dell 1400FP Monitor (800) 388-8542 *InfoLink No. 615*	**$1,499**	14.1 inches	1,024 by 768 at 75Hz/ 4 by 3	Great controls; vivid colors; good price.	You'll wish it were larger.	☆☆☆☆ **A fine deal on a great-looking small screen.**
Eizo Nanao Technologies FlexScan L34 (800) 800-5202 *InfoLink No. 616*	**$2,999**	15 inches	1,024 by 768 at 75Hz/ 4 by 3	Bright colors; wide viewing angle; base swivels gracefully.	Cluttered bezel; sky-high price.	☆☆☆☆ **A great picture, but wait for the sale.**
Iiyama North America ProLite 36 (888) 663-2289 *InfoLink No. 617*	**$998**	14.1 inches	1,024 by 768 at 75Hz/ 4 by 3	Beautiful, sharp picture; amazing price; wide viewing angle.	On the small side; confusing controls.	☆☆☆☆ **The cheapest ticket to a flat panel—and it looks sharp too.**
Nokia Display Products 500Xa (800) 296-6542 *InfoLink No. 618*	**$1,949**	15.1 inches	1,024 by 768 at 75Hz/ 4 by 3	Great text quality; innovative position adjustment; built-in speakers; USB-ready.	Clunky control knobs; some flickering and shadowing.	☆☆☆☆ **Solid image and flexible design.**
Sampo Technology PD-70FA (888) 321-4100 *InfoLink No. 619*	**$1,550**	15 inches	1,024 by 768 at 75Hz/ 3 by 2	Rich colors; solid image quality.	So-so text quality; poorly thought-out controls; narrow viewing angle.	☆☆☆☆ **A respectable picture at a respectable price.**
Sony Electronics Multiscan CPD-L150 (800) 352-7669 *InfoLink No. 620*	**$1,999**	15 inches	1,024 by 768 at 85Hz/ 4 by 3	Superb text quality; flexible design.	Inconveniently placed side controls; a bit expensive; colors a bit on the dim side.	☆☆☆☆ **For text work, it's a sure bet.**
AST Computer ASTVision 400 (800) 876-4278 *InfoLink No. 621*	**$1,450**	14 inches	1,024 by 768 at 60Hz/ 4 by 3	Crisp text; innovative 180-degree swiveling base; USB-ready; nice price.	Distracting flicker; onscreen controls difficult to navigate.	☆☆☆ **The price is right, but the image needs improvement.**
CTX Int'l PanoView 745 (888) 289-6786 *InfoLink No. 622*	**$1,995**	14.5 inches	1,024 by 768 at 60Hz/ 4 by 3	Solid picture; built-in speakers.	Middling text quality; narrow viewing angle; pricey.	☆☆☆ **A decent midrange monitor.**

*FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO WWW.PCCOMPUTING.COM/INFOLINK. **ESTIMATED STREET PRICE.

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continued on page 164

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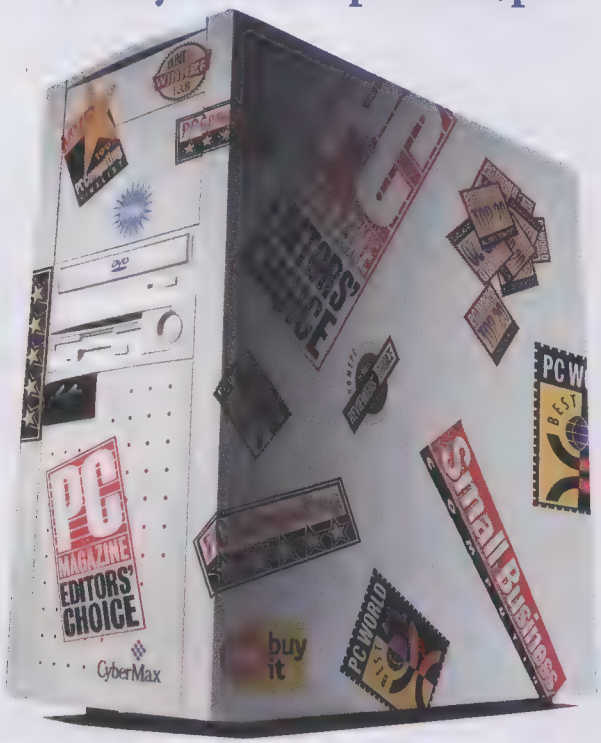

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Top Flat-Panel Monitors

continued from page 162

PRODUCT*	Price**	Display Size	Max. Resolution/ Aspect Ratio	Pros	Cons	Verdict
Hewlett-Packard HP 1024 14" Liquid Crystal Display (800) 322-4772	**$1,182**	14 inches	1,024 by 768 at 75Hz/ 4 by 3	Respectable color and text; convenient scroll wheels for brightness and contrast adjustment; affordable.	Advanced controls hard to get to.	☆☆☆ **Middle of the pack all the way around.**
IBM 9516 Color Flat Panel (800) 772-2227 *InfoLink No. 623*	**$2,229**	16.1 inches	1,280 by 1,024 at 60Hz/5 by 4	Giant screen; innovative design; wide viewing angle.	Blurred text; flicker; advanced controls hidden; you pay more for its big picture.	☆☆☆ **If only the picture were as slick as the package.**
Mitsubishi Electronics America LCD50 (800) 843-2515 *InfoLink No. 624*	**$1,999**	15 inches	1,024 by 768 at 75Hz/ 4 by 3	Straightforward controls; good-quality text.	Noticeable flicker.	☆☆☆ **Better deals abound.**
Panasonic Computer Peripheral PanaFlat LC40 (800) 742-8086 *InfoLink No. 625*	**$2,799**	14 inches	1,024 by 768 at 75Hz/ 4 by 3	Sharp images; intuitive controls; wide viewing angle.	Poor contrast; inconsistent picture; high price for a small screen.	☆☆☆ **Nice picture, but you'll pay dearly.**
Princeton Graphic Systems LD50A (800) 747-6249 *InfoLink No. 626*	**$1,449**	13.8 inches	1,024 by 768 at 75Hz/ 4 by 3	Rich, deep colors; crisp images; fair price.	Disappointing text; tiny display; frustrating controls.	☆☆☆ **It's solid, but you can get a bigger display for less money.**
Samsung Electronics America SyncMaster 500TFT (800) 933-4110 *InfoLink No. 627*	**$1,699**	15 inches	1,024 by 768 at 70Hz/ 4 by 3	Handy controls; built-in speakers and microphone; swiveling base; USB-ready.	Colors too dark when running some applications; text should be bolder.	☆☆☆ **The multimedia champ.**
ViewSonic VP140 (800) 888-8583 *InfoLink No. 628*	**$1,145**	14 inches	1,024 by 768 at 75Hz/ 4 by 3	Excellent price; convenient brightness and contrast controls.	Weak text; some flickering; washed-out color.	☆☆☆ **There are better deals—and picture quality.**
Philips Electronics Brilliance 4500AX (800) 835-3506 *InfoLink No. 629*	**$1,899**	14.5 inches	1,024 by 768 at 75Hz/ 4 by 3	Brightness and contrast controls easy to get to; built-in speakers and volume control.	Advanced controls hidden; mediocre image quality; pricey.	☆☆ **Doesn't measure up to the competition.**
Sceptre Technologies FT15G (800) 788-2878 *InfoLink No. 630*	**$999**	14.5 inches	1,024 by 768 at 75Hz/ 4 by 3	Strong color; amazingly low price.	Uneven brightness; poor viewing angle and overall image quality.	☆☆ **The price is right, but overall image quality falls short.**

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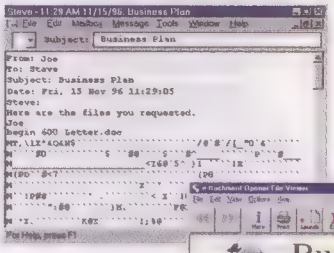

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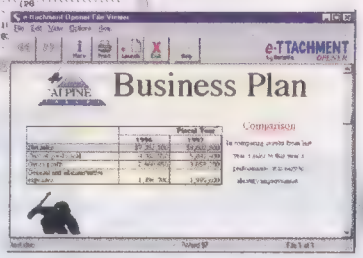

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The Future of Flat

For desktop monitors, thin is finally in. A 15-inch flat panel for less than $2,000 is a dream come true, especially for a display as impressive as the NEC MultiSync LCD1510. But even as you're reaching for your wallet, one question nags at the back of your mind: Are bigger and better flat screens on the way?

Yes, they are. Several 18-inch monitors are in the works, and NEC already offers the MultiSync LCD2010, a stunning 20.1-inch successor to the MultiSync LCD1510. But in the same way that 15-inch models initially hit the streets at sky-high prices, these big screens will take a while to become truly affordable. The cost of the biggest flat monitor on the block will be steep—at least $5,000—and may not come down for a few years. The MultiSync LCD2010 will set you back $6,599.

So if you're dying to retire your clunky CRT right now, take the plunge and go for a 15-inch flat-panel screen. We found some clear winners. For the no-compromise top of the line, you can't go wrong with NEC's MultiSync LCD1510. Its great picture, flexible pivoting design, and reasonable price are everything that's right about flat-panel displays. Sony and Eizo Nanao also make tempting 15-inch screens, but at a higher price. If you can live with a 14.5-inch panel, go the bargain route with Akia's Radiance VX145, or shrink the size and price a little more with Iiyama's ProLite 36. If you need a few extras—like speakers or USB—Compaq's TFT500 and Samsung's 500TFT give you a full multimedia experience.

As for anything larger, hold off for now. The quality of big screens is still too unpredictable, and they're too pricey to risk the investment. But don't pinch too many pennies, either—overall prices are still high and you'll regret it if you compromise on a teensy screen or poor quality just to save a couple hundred bucks. If you buy the best and biggest display your budget can handle today, it'll last you several years, until you're ready to upgrade to the next big screen.

Lab testing was performed by JULI DAVIS, IBRAHIM GUL, *and* TIM A. MILLER.

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1 Choose the factor that's most important.	2 Choose the next most important factor.	3 What else is important?	4 For your needs, the best display to buy is . . .
Image Quality	Usability	Size	NEC MultiSync LCD1510
		Features	NEC MultiSync LCD1510
	Price	Size	Akia Radiance VX145
		Features	NEC MultiSync LCD1510
Price	Usability	Size	Akia Radiance VX145
		Features	Akia Radiance VX145
	Image Quality	Size	Akia Radiance VX145
		Features	Iiyama ProLite 36
Usability	Price	Size	Dell 1400FP Monitor
		Features	Dell 1400FP Monitor
	Image Quality	Size	NEC MultiSync LCD1510
		Features	NEC MultiSync LCD1510

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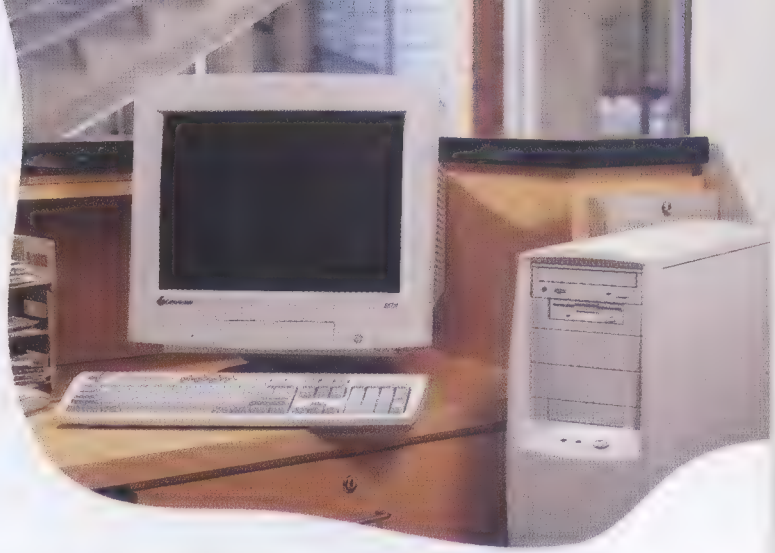

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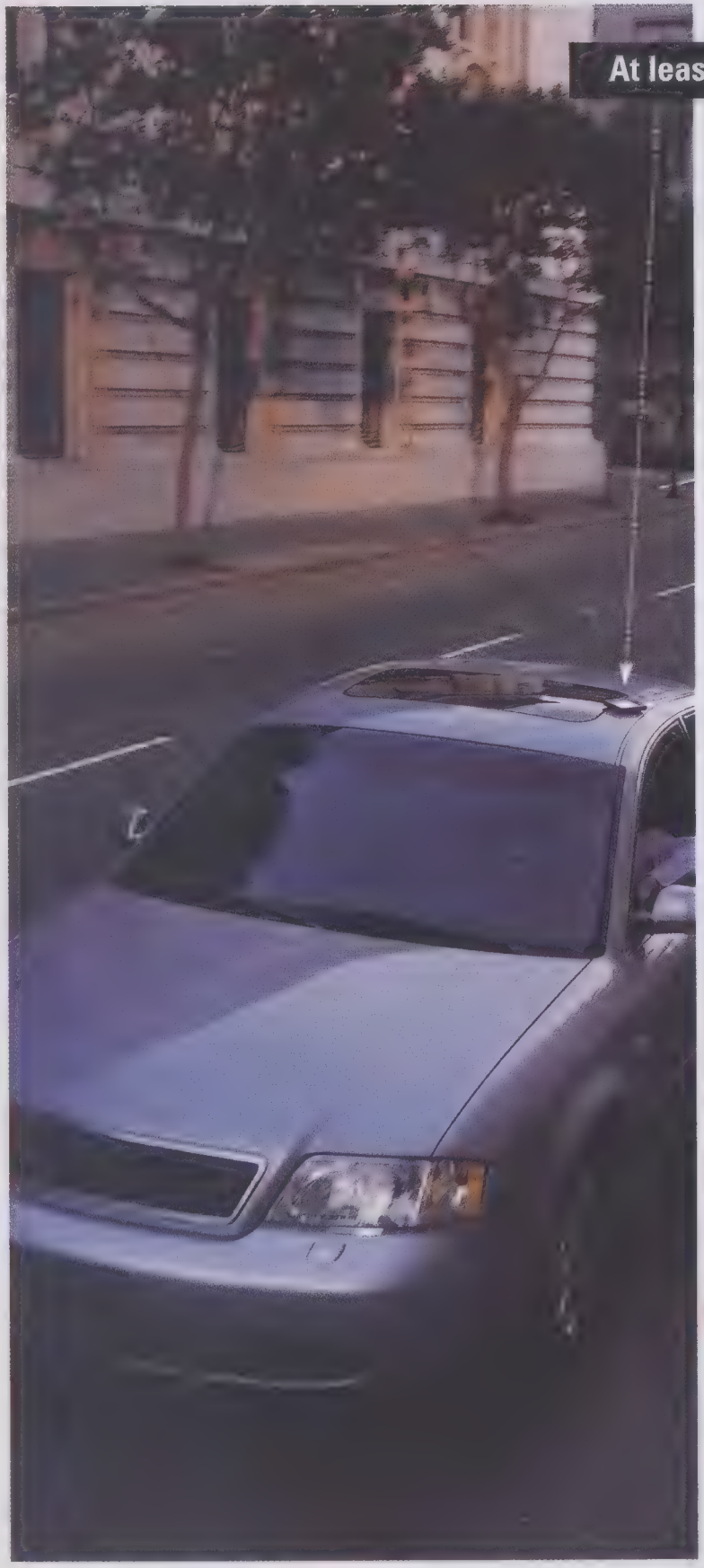

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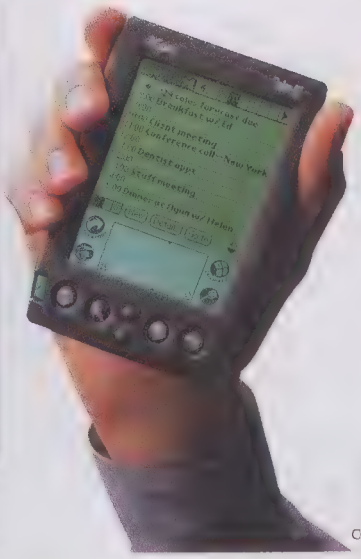

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Ten years ago, the cost per megabyte for hard disk storage was over $11.50. Last year, that same megabyte went for about a dime. Today, some of the hard drives in our roundup cost as little as 3.3 cents per megabyte. And that's just for starters—IBM's new drives pack data twice as densely,

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK JOHANN

BY DAVE JOHNSON

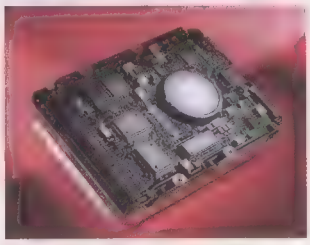
TOP 6GB-TO-9GB HARD DRIVES

PRODUCT[1]	Price[2]	Capacity	Cost per Megabyte	Seek Time[3]	Verdict
PCComputing BEST **IBM Deskstar 8** (800) 772-2227 *InfoLink No. 637*	**$309**	8.4GB	3.6 cents	9.5ms	☆☆☆☆☆ The best combination of speed and capacity.
Quantum Fireball EL 7.6GB; (800) 624-5545 *InfoLink No. 638*	**$269 list**	7.6GB	3.5 cents	9.5ms	☆☆☆☆ Standout performance at a great price. We'll take it.
Seagate Medalist Pro 6530; (800) 732-4283 *InfoLink No. 639*	**$335**	6.5GB	5.0 cents	10ms	☆☆☆☆ Smokes the competition, but also has the highest cost per megabyte.
Western Digital WD Caviar 6.4GB (800) 832-4778 *InfoLink No. 640*	**$229**	6.4GB	3.5 cents	9.5ms	☆☆☆☆ If you need a drive, this easy-to-install workhorse is a natural.
Maxtor DiamondMax 2160; (800) 262-9867 *InfoLink No. 641*	**$310**	8.4GB	3.6 cents	9.7ms	☆☆☆ Middling performer offers beefy size at a reasonable price.
Fujitsu MPB3064AT (800) 626-4686 *InfoLink No. 642*	**$235**	6.5GB	3.5 cents	10ms	☆☆ Tied for last place in performance; you can find bigger and cheaper drives.
Samsung VG36483A (800) 933-4110 *InfoLink No. 643*	**$243**	6.4GB	3.7 cents	10ms	☆☆ Performance and size close to Fujitsu's; you'll find better deals elsewhere.

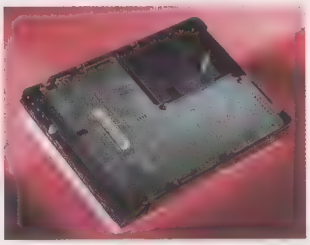
[1]FOR MORE INFO, GO TO WWW.PCCOMPUTING.COM/INFOLINK. [2]ESTIMATED STREET PRICE. [3]VENDOR'S ESTIMATE.

☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE

Best Value **The Quantum Fireball EL 7.6GB is a steal at 3.5 cents per megabyte.**



Best Performance **The Seagate Medalist Pro 6530 has near-SCSI speed.**

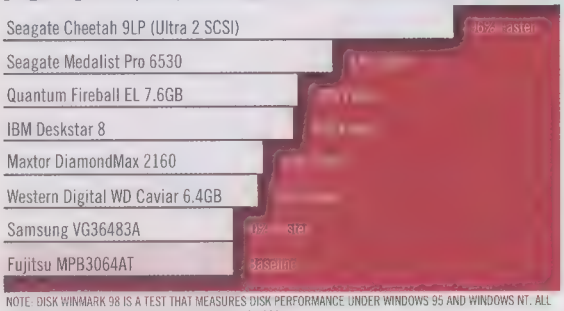


Best Usability **Western Digital's WD Caviar 6.4GB is a dream to install.**

opening the way for even larger and cheaper hard disks in the next few years.

All of these reductions in price and increases in capacity are occurring in the realm of the once-disparaged EIDE drive. These days, a drive with a SCSI interface makes sense only if you're daisy-chaining lots of drives together—as you would for a server—or if you need SCSI's sequential writing ability for professional video work. If neither scenario applies, you'll find a drive that meets your needs in one of these EIDE monsters. Though SCSI drives are often faster, they come at considerable expense. The Seagate Cheetah 9LP, an award-winning 9.1GB Ultra 2 SCSI drive we tested for comparison, was nearly twice as fast as the quickest 6GB-to-9GB EIDE drive. But you pay a whopping 10.2 cents per megabyte for such performance—and that doesn't even include the cost of a SCSI controller.

Performance: 6GB-to-9GB Hard Drives

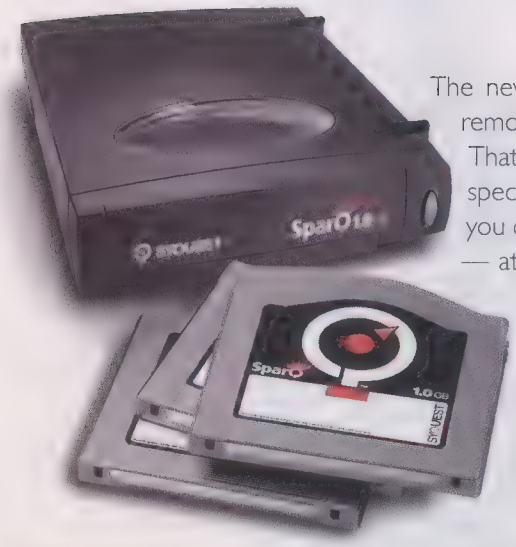


NOTE: DISK WINMARK 98 IS A TEST THAT MEASURES DISK PERFORMANCE UNDER WINDOWS 95 AND WINDOWS NT. ALL TESTS WERE PERFORMED ON A DELL DIMENSION XPS D333.

Small Giants **None of these drives are as fast as Seagate's Ultra 2 SCSI Cheetah 9LP, but its Medalist Pro 6530 turns in excellent EIDE performance.**

Size Matters The largest drives in each of our two test ranges—the 8.4GB Maxtor DiamondMax 2160 and the 16.8GB IBM Deskstar 16GP—aren't the fastest. But excellent compromises that balance speed and capacity do exist. Both the Quantum Fireball EL 7.6GB and the 8.4GB IBM Deskstar 8 offer high-capacity storage and impressive performance—features that make them great for huge Internet files and the clip-art collections that accompany graphics suites. In the 10GB-plus class, the IBM Deskstar 14GXP is significantly faster than its peers

Think Gig.



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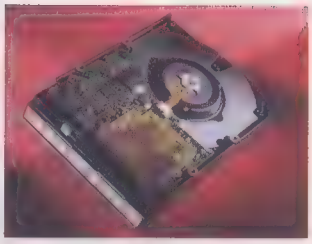
TOP 10GB-AND-LARGER HARD DRIVES

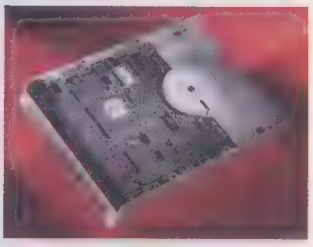
PRODUCT	Price[2]	Capacity	Cost per Megabyte	Seek Time[3]	Verdict
PCComputing BEST **IBM Deskstar 14GXP** (800) 772-2227 *InfoLink No. 644*	**$659**	14.4GB	4.5 cents	9.5ms	☆☆☆☆☆ Unbelievable: Faster than SCSI drives, yet it costs hundreds of dollars less than SCSI. While it's the most expensive in this category, the Deskstar 14GXP is worth it.
IBM Deskstar 16GP (800) 772-2227 *InfoLink No. 645*	**$569**	16.8GB	3.3 cents	9.5ms	☆☆☆☆ The biggest drive of the bunch, but you'll take a performance hit. Terrific cost per megabyte.
Maxtor DiamondMax 2880 (800) 262-9867 *InfoLink No. 646*	**$430**	11.5GB	3.7 cents	9.0ms	☆☆☆ Not the fastest, largest, or cheapest, but still a solid buy. Its excellent manual, software, and installation kit make setup a cinch.
Quantum Fireball EL 10.2GB (800) 624-5545 *InfoLink No. 647*	**$359 list**	10.2GB	3.4 cents	9.5ms	☆☆☆ The slowest drive in the pack, but not by much. And the price more than compensates.

[1]FOR MORE INFO, GO TO WWW.PCCOMPUTING.COM/INFOLINK. [2]ESTIMATED STREET PRICE. [3]VENDOR'S ESTIMATE.

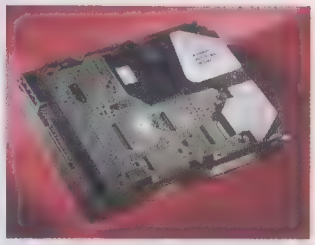
☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE



Best Performance IBM's Deskstar 14GXP even blazed past a comparable SCSI drive.



Best Usability Maxtor's DiamondMax 2880 comes with everything you need.



Best Value At 3.4 cents per megabyte, the Quantum Fireball EL 10.2GB is a steal.

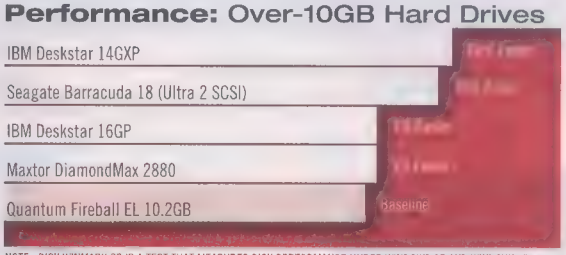
and offers a generous 14.4GB of storage space (but at a more costly 4.5 cents per megabyte). Its blazing performance and plentiful storage make it a safe bet for demanding work.

When it comes to very large drives—those over 10GB—it's hard to make a bad choice. The 14.4GB Deskstar not only managed to outperform all the other 10GB-plus drives in the roundup, but it also smoked our mammoth SCSI champ and A-List pick for network storage, the Seagate Barracuda 18. If you need sheer size, go for its sibling, the 16.8GB Deskstar. While considerably slower than the 14GXP, it still outperformed all but one of the smaller 6GB-to-9GB entries.

Usability Counts Then there's the issue of installation. Most new hard drives are easy to install and configure, a dramatic change from just a few years ago. In those days, you often had to call the manufacturer to learn how to set your drive's jumper settings and designate it as the primary or secondary storage source—or the master and slave, as they're commonly called. This year, almost all the drives we reviewed come with jumper settings clearly labeled. The Maxtor and Quantum drives, in fact, are the only units that don't make master and slave positions obvious. IBM, Maxtor, Seagate, and Western Digital even bundle convenient partitioning and formatting software. Quantum also tries to make installation more foolproof with a unique shock-mounting system designed to improve drive reliability.

It's always a nice touch to find extra hardware in the box. IBM thoughtfully includes a ribbon cable, and the Maxtor and Western Digital drives come with complete mounting kits. If you're skittish about installing a new hard drive, though, the Western Digital WD Caviar 6.4GB is the one for you, thanks to its excellent manual and a quick-installation guide.

Performance: Over-10GB Hard Drives



NOTE: DISK WINMARK 98 IS A TEST THAT MEASURES DISK PERFORMANCE UNDER WINDOWS 95 AND WINDOWS NT. ALL TESTS WERE PERFORMED ON A DELL DIMENSION XPS D333.

Passing Lane It doesn't get much faster than this. IBM's Deskstar 14GXP even pulled ahead of the expensive Ultra 2 SCSI Seagate Barracuda 18.

Shift into Overdrive

There's never been a better time to buy a hard drive. They're bigger and faster than ever, and you don't have to install and configure a SCSI controller, even for a mega 16.8GB disk. Best of all, you don't have to sacrifice performance to get a lot of storage space. The fastest of the small drives is the 6.5GB Seagate Medalist Pro 6530. Likewise, the 14.4GB IBM Deskstar 14GXP is another speed demon. It outperforms all the 6GB-to-9GB drives as well as its fellow 10GB-plus drives—and it's faster than SCSI. Plus it's cheaper per megabyte than the most expensive 6GB-to-9GB drive we tested.

While the Medalist Pro and the Deskstar will leave skid marks on your motherboard, only the video and network server crowds go straight for the fastest option. You'll also want to weigh cost, capacity, performance, and usability. For sheer size, the 16.8GB IBM Deskstar 16GP is hard to walk away from, costing just 3.3 cents per megabyte. Another great choice is the 8.4GB IBM Deskstar 8. It tied for the largest in the 6GB-to-9GB class, yet it's speedy and affordable.

The budget-conscious can go home with almost any drive in our roundup this year, but the Quantum Fireball EL 7.6GB hits our sweet spot. It costs 3.5 cents per megabyte, and only one other EIDE drive in the 6GB-to-9GB range beat its speed. The enormous and fast Deskstar 16GP is also a steal.

Hard drives got a big boost in performance and capacity this year, but usability was another matter. Western Digital's WD Caviar 6.4GB was the exception, offering an outstanding manual, clearly labeled jumpers, and a complete mounting kit right in the box. The Maxtor DiamondMax 2880 is nearly twice as big and almost as convenient, but you have to open the manual to understand the jumper settings.

Whatever you're shopping for, 1998 is a banner year for hard drives. And 1999 will be even better. But by then, don't be surprised if your 14GB monster is full and you're ready for more.

DAVE JOHNSON *is the author of* Upgrading and Repairing Your PC Answers *and* Small Business Microsoft Office 97 for Dummies. *Lab testing was performed by* JULI DAVIS *and* IBRAHIM GUL.

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1 Choose the factor that's most important.	2 Choose the next most important factor.	3 How much room do you need?	4 For your needs, the best drive to buy is . . .
Performance	Price	6GB to 9GB	Quantum Fireball EL 7.6GB
		10GB and Over	IBM Deskstar 14GXP
	Usability	6GB to 9GB	IBM Deskstar 8
		10GB and Over	IBM Deskstar 14GXP
Price	Performance	6GB to 9GB	Quantum Fireball EL 7.6GB
		10GB and Over	IBM Deskstar 16GP
	Usability	6GB to 9GB	Western Digital WD Caviar 6.4GB
		10GB and Over	Maxtor DiamondMax 2880
Usability	Performance	6GB to 9GB	IBM Deskstar 8
		10GB and Over	IBM Deskstar 14GXP
	Price	6GB to 9GB	Western Digital WD Caviar 6.4GB
		10GB and Over	IBM Deskstar 16GP

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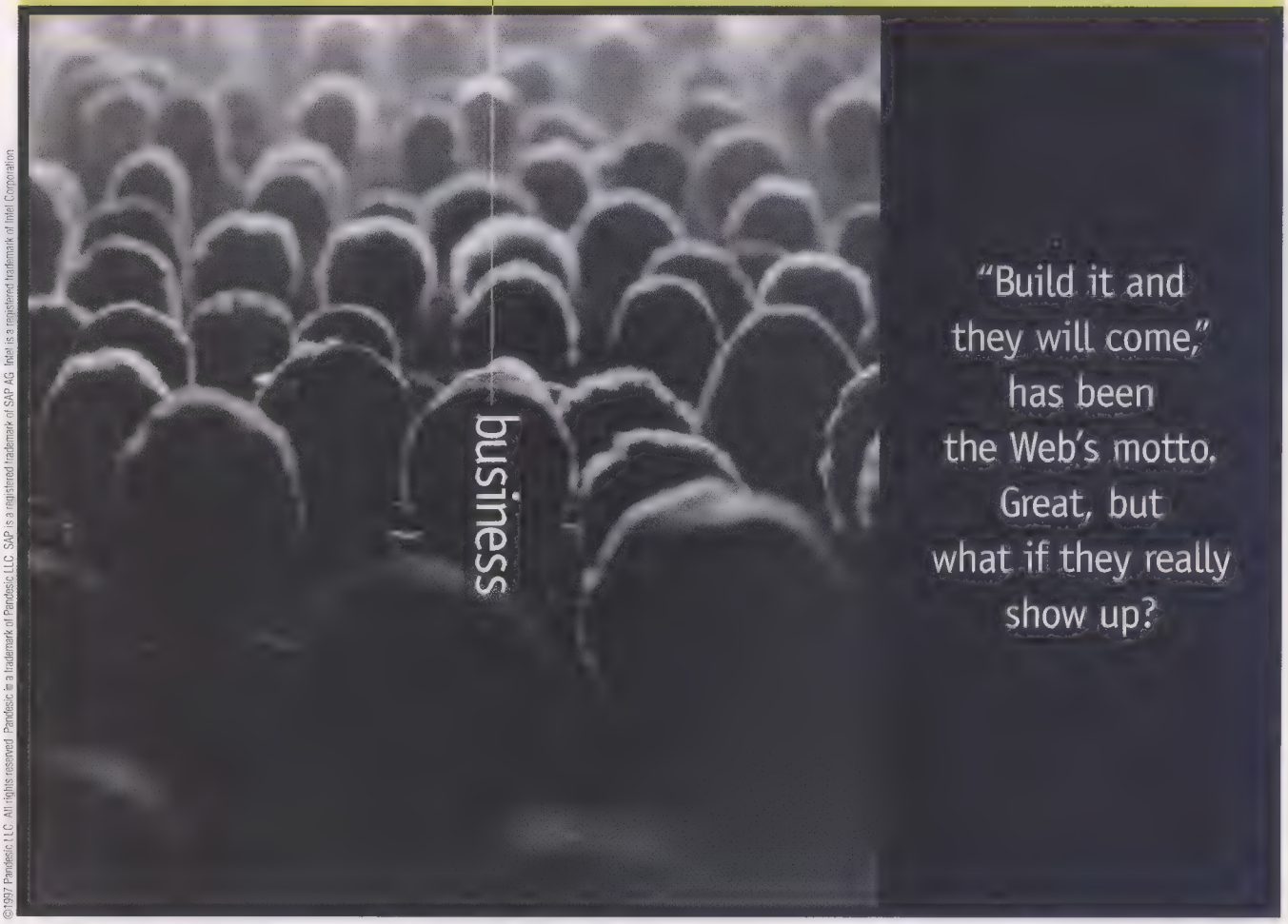

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REMOVE IT OR Lose It

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? DO-IT-ALL REMOVABLE DRIVES LET YOU TAKE ALL YOUR FILES WITH YOU.

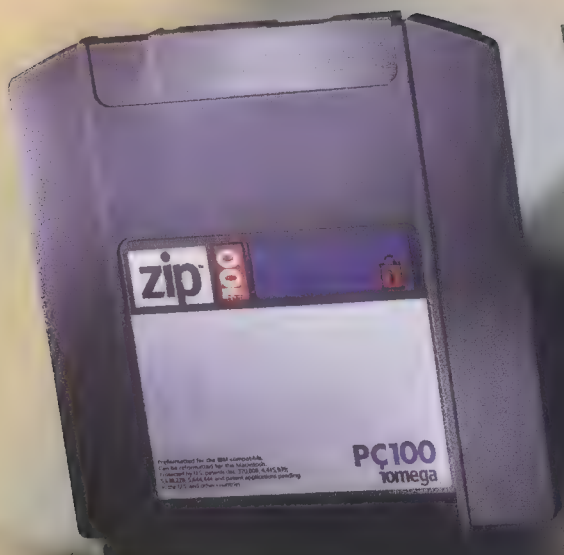
Imagine throwing your entire hard drive on a disk, then taking it on the road. How about never seeing an out-of-disk-space error message again? What if backing up was as easy as dragging and dropping an icon? You can do all of this—and more—without trading in your hard drive. Simply add a removable drive to your system.

Whether you need an affordable way to transport large files, some speedy relief for your data-choked hard disk, or a reliable place to back up your data, there's a removable-storage solution for you. The trick is choosing the one with the right combination of performance, capacity, reliability, affordability, and compatibility.

To help you decide, we tested eight removable storage devices in the *PC Computing* Performance Labs, with prices ranging from $150 to $499 and capacities from 100MB to 2GB. Which one is best for shuttling big files around town? For serving as a second hard drive? For archiving your data? The answers may surprise you.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK JOHANN

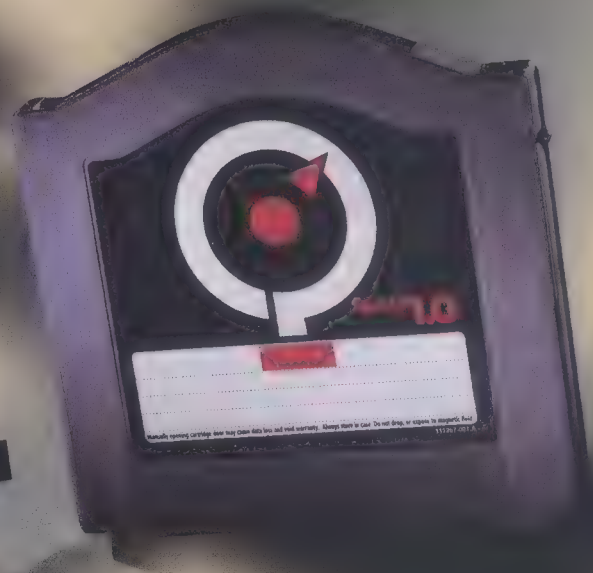
BY RICK BROIDA



MOVE BIG FILES

- THE IOMEGA ZIP PLUS IS STILL THE TOP CHOICE FOR TRANSFERRING LARGE FILES.
- INEXPENSIVE 100MB DRIVE—$200 AND 12 CENTS PER MEGABYTE.
- COMPATIBILITY GUARANTEED: EVERY OFFICE HAS A ZIP DRIVE.

PAGE 186



RUN YOUR APPS

- THE SYQUEST SPARQ ADDS AN EXTRA GIGABYTE TO YOUR HARD DRIVE WHENEVER YOU NEED IT.
- FAST ENOUGH TO KEEP UP WITH YOUR HARD DRIVE.
- CHEAPER THAN A HARD DRIVE AT $199 AND 3.8 CENTS PER MEGABYTE.

PAGE 188

EASY BACKUP

- THE SYQUEST SPARQ STORES UP TO 1GB OF UNCOMPRESSED DATA.
- DIRT-CHEAP STORAGE—$199 DRIVE AND 3.8 CENTS PER MEGABYTE.
- SPEEDY AS A HARD DRIVE, SO BACKUPS TAKE MINUTES.

PAGE 190

Move Big Files

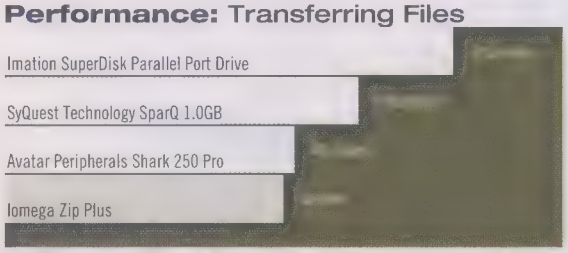
There's no way that huge file will fit on a single floppy disk. You need to work on it over the weekend at home, but how are you going to get it there? Or what about that gigantic presentation you need to take on the road? Who wants to deal with burning it onto a CD? To transfer data files from one PC to another, you need a removable drive.

Zip It Up Iomega's Zip Plus is the Visa of removable storage drives—its cartridges are accepted everywhere. When it comes to sharing data, no other drive beats its compatibility. You'll love the bundled software too.

Compatibility is the most important factor when it comes to moving files. If a drive can't read your disk, you've got the electronic equivalent of a square peg and a round hole. Unfortunately, compatibility remains an unresolved issue among today's removable-storage drives. Of the eight devices we tested, not one can share its media with another. So it's important to choose a drive that's readily available. If you don't know what drive you need, opt for the one that's most widely used: Iomega's Zip Plus. The $200 Zip Plus is Iomega's second-generation offering. Its improvements over the previous Zip include faster performance, a full suite of software, and better portability thanks to a more compact power supply.

Alas, a Zip disk holds only 100MB of data. That's fine for stashing downloads, documents, and digital images, but may not be enough for those overgrown Photoshop files. For bigger jobs choose a larger-capacity option, from the 120MB Imation SuperDisk Parallel Port Drive ($150) to the $199 SyQuest Technology SparQ 1.0GB. Surprisingly, as capacity increases prices don't necessarily jump up too. The $249 Avatar Peripherals 250MB Shark 250 Pro and its media will set you back quite a bit more than the SparQ. SyQuest's inexpensive SparQ drive stores a whopping 1GB of data on equally affordable cartridges—just 3.8 cents a megabyte. Think it's impossible you'll ever need to transport that much data? Hey, Windows 98 alone requires 220MB. Plan for the future; a drive that seems overkill today may become a baseline requirement tomorrow.

Performance: Transferring Files



NOTE: DISK WINMARK 98 MEASURES DISK PERFORMANCE OF DRIVES OVER 150MB UNDER WINDOWS 95 AND WINDOWS NT. FOR SMALLER DRIVES WE RAN A COMPARABLE FILE-TRANSFER TEST.

Fast Track The SyQuest SparQ's EIDE interface helped it burn past the parallel-port Zip and the Avatar Shark, but it was no match for the Imation SuperDisk.

The price of a removable-storage device (and its media) also factors into how widely it's adopted. The more expensive the drive and disks, the less likely they are to find their way into mainstream business use. So even if you splurge on something like the $499 Iomega Jaz 2GB or the $449 Fujitsu DynaMO 640 magneto-optical drive, you could wind up with media that few others can share. A better solution is the Zip Plus or the SparQ, which are affordable enough that lots of people will be able to buy one, which will mean no compatibility problems.

As always, speed matters. So why not buy the fastest removable storage available? Performance counts, but when you're moving large files compatibility, capacity, and price come before speed. Each of the drives in our review roars past a 3.5-inch floppy drive. But even if one drive runs circles around another, it won't matter much if the disk isn't compatible with its destination.

Small but Mighty It should come as no surprise that the Iomega Zip Plus is our top pick for sharing files. Yes, it stores the least amount of data per cartridge of any drive in this roundup. It's also the slowest drive in its class (with a parallel-port connection, anyway—the SCSI and internal versions are significantly quicker). And, yes, it's pricey at $200 for the drive and $12 per 100MB cartridge. But the Zip has a large following, so the all-important compatibility issue is not a concern. Plus the drive includes an amazing software bundle, including Digital Arts & Sciences ImageAXS, Adobe PhotoDeluxe 2.0, DataViz Web Buddy, Iomega RecordIt, PictureWorks NetCard, and Iomega 1-Step Backup/Restore.

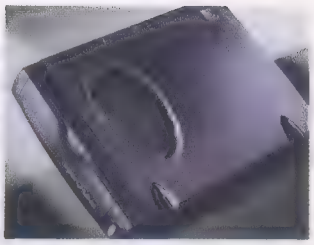
In an ideal world, though, we'd all have a SyQuest SparQ 1.0GB drive. The logical heir-apparent to the Zip Plus, the SparQ costs about the same as the Zip Plus and holds ten times the data. Even its cartridges are a bargain,

TOP DISKETTE DRIVES

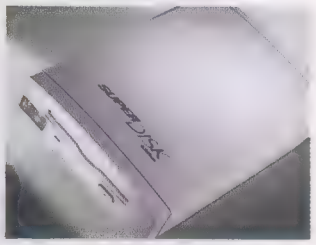
PRODUCT[1]	Price/ Price of Media[2]	Capacity/ Cost per Megabyte	Interface Tested	Seek Time[3]	Verdict
PCComputing BEST **Iomega Corp. Zip Plus** (800) 446-6342 *InfoLink No. 601*	**$200/ $12 ($35 for 3-pack)**	100MB/ 12 cents	Parallel port	29ms	☆☆☆☆☆ Don't take any chances. The Zip Plus gives you carte blanche for sharing and moving files. And it's affordable.
SyQuest Technology SparQ 1.0GB (800) 245-2278 *InfoLink No. 602*	**$199/ $39 ($99 for 3-pack)**	1GB/ 3.8 cents	EIDE	12ms	☆☆☆☆ Watch out, Zip, here comes the SparQ—faster, bigger, and just as inexpensive. If sharing disks isn't an issue, get it.
Avatar Peripherals Shark 250 Pro (888) 462-8282 *InfoLink No. 603*	**$249/ $39 ($99 for 3-pack)**	250MB/ 15.6 cents	Parallel port	12ms	☆☆☆ Could be a contender with a lower price and better performance. A perfect travel companion for mobile users though.
Imation SuperDisk Parallel Port Drive (888) 466-3456 *InfoLink No. 604*	**$150 list/ $50 for 3-pack**	120MB/ 10.8 cents	Parallel port	70ms	☆☆☆ A fine floppy replacement that won't keep you waiting. But you won't readily be able to share its disks.

[1]FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO WWW.PCCOMPUTING.COM/INFOLINK. [2]ESTIMATED STREET PRICE UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE. [3]VENDOR'S STATS.

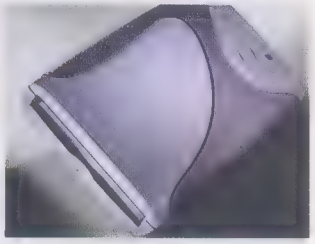
☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE



Zip Killer? The 1GB SyQuest SparQ is the one to watch for speed, size, and price.



Better Floppy The Imation SuperDisk works with its own 120MB disks *and* floppy disks.



Get Small Avatar's Shark 250 Pro packs 250MB onto cracker-size cartridges.

selling at $39 for a single 1GB disk and $99 for a pack of three. And while not as speedy as the Imation SuperDisk Parallel Port Drive, it leaves the Zip Plus and the Avatar Shark 250 Pro in the dust. Because the SparQ drive is newer than the Zip, however, it carries a compatibility red flag. Wonderful as the drive is, it'll take some time before it's widely adopted by the masses. In the meantime, if you need compatibility only within your own organization, there's no better choice than the SparQ.

Imation's $150 SuperDisk Parallel Port Drive is also an idea whose time has come. And gone. Five years ago, we'd have heralded a backward-compatible 120MB floppy disk drive. Today, it's too little, too late. Though the SuperDisk smoked past the Zip Plus, the SparQ, and the Shark, it holds only 20MB more than the Zip. The drive itself costs less than the Zip Plus, but its proprietary 120MB disks are about 13 bucks a pop. And again there's the compatibility issue. The SuperDisk may be able to read and write to standard 1.44MB floppies, but standard floppy drives can't read or write to SuperDisk disks.

Similarly, Avatar's Shark 250 Pro could have dethroned the Zip Plus—had it arrived a little sooner. For about $50 more you get 250MB of storage from a drive that's dramatically smaller than the Zip Plus. Indeed, the ultracompact Shark is ideal for notebook users, as it comes with both parallel and PC Card interfaces. Plus it requires no external power supply, so it'll barely make a bulge in your notebook carrying case. The drive's cracker-size cartridges are $39 each, however, so there's no savings in the cost of media. It's also a slowpoke compared with most of the other drives we tested. Compatibility? Who's gonna buy a Shark when the same money buys SyQuest's faster, higher-capacity SparQ plus a three-pack of 1GB cartridges?

Are these removable disks and drives tough enough to take on the road? Unfortunately they're not indestructible, nor can you expect them to last forever. Sure, they can withstand the occasional drop or spill, but handle them with care. Of the drives in this group, the Zip Plus is the toughest with its strong casing. The Avatar is small and lightweight and comes with a plastic carrying case for easy travel. If durability is your most important concern, look at the more rugged optical drives with disklike platters instead of cartridges.

Run Your Apps

We've all been there: You want to install a new application and you get an out-of-disk-space error message. Or you spend hours on an eye-popping multimedia presentation only to discover you don't have anywhere to save it. Wiping out old and unused files is always an option. A better solution: Extend your existing hard drive with removable storage.

Number Cruncher **Here's a little math you won't mind doing: $39 for each gigabyte of SparQ storage equals 3.8 cents per megabyte. Not a bad deal for the fastest removable drive around.**

Why opt for removable storage when you can buy a 4GB internal hard drive for as little as $200 or 5 cents a megabyte? True, that kind of space would tide you over for quite some time. But you wouldn't get the added benefits of removable storage, such as data backup and file transfer. Use a removable drive to run applications, so you can share them with other computers. Think of it: Your entire hard drive goes where you go, from work to home to business trips. Best of all, removable storage gives you room to grow, whereas a hard drive is limited to what it can hold.

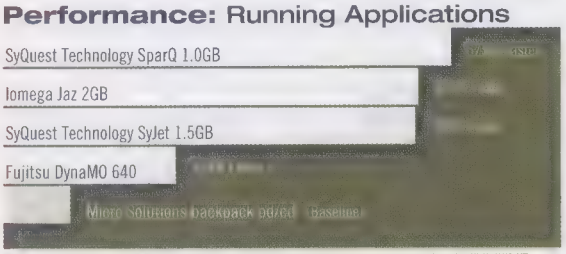
Cut to the Quick On the performance side, removables don't quite compete with hard drives. Even the fastest drive we tested, SyQuest Technology's SparQ 1.0GB, can't match the speed of today's internal hard drives. But it comes awfully close, and it's fast enough to run all but the most disk-intensive applications such as Adobe Photoshop. Ditto for SyQuest's other entry, the SyJet 1.5GB, and Iomega's Jaz 2GB drive. However, there are some slowpokes in the group—namely, Fujitsu's DynaMO 640 and Micro Solutions' backpack pd/cd. These drives, which use sluggish magneto-optical and optical technologies, aren't as well suited to running programs, but they're fine for storing frequently used data.

Of course, the amount of data and applications you can store depends on the capacity of the drive's media. The five drives we tested for this scenario hold anywhere from 640MB to 2GB per cartridge; you have to decide just how much storage you need. Hint: Just as your hard drive always fills up faster than you think it will, so will your removable media. We'll say it again: You can never have too much storage space. Go for the highest capacity you can afford.

Speaking of affordability, you want removable storage that's inexpensive to use. A reasonably priced drive can turn into a money pit if you have to spend a fortune on cartridges every time you turn around. Alternately, cheap media usually mean low capacity (take Iomega's $12 Zip disks, which store only 100MB at a cost of 12 cents per megabyte). The key is to find an affordable drive that uses reasonably priced, high-capacity media.

Here's one way to look at it: A Jaz 2GB drive with a 2GB cartridge costs $499, while a SparQ drive with 1GB costs $199. You can buy a three-pack of 1GB SparQ cartridges for $99, so you can pocket 10GB of storage before you've matched the price of a Jaz 2GB. If you're really into cheap media, 640MB disks for the DynaMO drive are only $20 apiece—which works out to just 3.1 cents per megabyte. But the drive itself is a hefty $449.

Performance: Running Applications



NOTE: DISK WINMARK 98 IS A TEST THAT MEASURES DISK PERFORMANCE UNDER WINDOWS 95 AND WINDOWS NT. ALL TESTS WERE PERFORMED ON A DELL DIMENSION XPS D333.

No Surprises **Devices like the SparQ 1.0GB, the Jaz 2GB, and the SyJet 1.5GB use the same high-performance technology found in magnetic hard drives.**

Winning Drive We've never seen a better combination of speed, capacity, and affordability than the SyQuest SparQ. This internal drive uses a standard EIDE interface (a parallel-port version is also available), so it'll work in just about any system and doesn't require messing around with SCSI cards. In fact, the SparQ outperformed the three SCSI-based entries in the group: its big-brother SyJet drive, Iomega's Jaz 2GB, and Fujitsu's DynaMO 640. Even more amazing, the 1GB SparQ drive costs only $199, with 1GB cartridges going for a mere $39 (or $99 for a pack of three). Three gigabytes for a hundred bucks? What's the catch? Sounds too good to be true.

Well, a gigabyte doesn't go quite as far as it used to,

TOP HARD DRIVE EXTENDERS

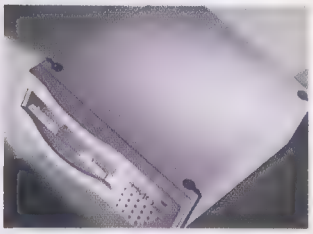
PRODUCT	Price/ Price of Media[2]	Capacity/ Cost per Megabyte	Interface Tested	Seek Time[3]	Verdict
PC Computing BEST **SyQuest Technology SparQ 1.0GB** (800) 245-2278 *InfoLink No. 602*	**$199/ $39 ($99 for 3-pack)**	1GB/ 3.8 cents	EIDE	12ms	☆☆☆☆☆ The fastest and cheapest drive around—you can't afford not to buy one. It's also a breeze to install. What are you waiting for?
Iomega Corp. Jaz 2GB (800) 446-6342 *InfoLink No. 605*	**$499/ $125 ($300 for 3-pack)**	2GB/ 6.1 cents	Ultra SCSI	11ms	☆☆☆☆ Pricey, but it's got turbocharged performance and unparalleled capacity you'll crave.
SyQuest Technology SyJet 1.5GB (800) 245-2278 *InfoLink No. 606*	**$299/ $79 ($199 for 3-pack)**	1.5GB/ 5.1 cents	SCSI	12ms	☆☆☆☆ The deal to beat among SCSI-based removable drives. A terrific value with its 1.5GB cartridges and great performance.
Fujitsu Computer Products of America DynaMO 640 (800) 626-4686 *InfoLink No. 607*	**$449/ $20**	640MB/ 3.1 cents	SCSI	35ms	☆☆☆ Great for offloading data with its durable discs, but too sluggish to run your applications.
Micro Solutions backpack pd/cd (800) 890-7227 *InfoLink No. 608*	**$269/ $30**	650MB/ 4.6 cents	Parallel port	230ms	☆☆☆ Too slow to serve as a real extension for your hard drive.

[1]FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO WWW.PCCOMPUTING.COM/INFOLINK. [2]ESTIMATED STREET PRICE. [3]VENDOR'S STATS.

☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE

Big Time If only we could all afford Iomega's superhuge Jaz 2GB drive and cartridges.

SyJet Dream You won't even notice that apps aren't running on your hard drive.



MO Room Fujitsu's DynaMO 640 drive is slow, but great for storing data for the long haul.

what with today's bloated applications, enormous multimedia files, and all those goodies you've been downloading off the Web. If you see yourself swapping too many cartridges, take a step up to something larger: SyQuest's SyJet. Our top pick in last year's roundup, the 1.5GB SyJet remains a speedy and spacious solution for the big-file blues. Ironically, SyQuest has done a fine job creating competition for itself, having knocked the SyJet's price down to $299. That includes a 1.5GB starter cartridge; extras are a reasonable $79 each.

The price/performance ratio takes a nosedive with Iomega's 2GB Jaz drive, which replaces last year's slower and smaller 1GB model. It's intended for buyers with deep pockets—you'll pay a hefty price ($499) for the Jaz 2GB's hefty storage. And if you think that's a tough pill to swallow, try coughing up $125 for a 2GB cartridge. While there's no denying the giddy feeling that comes from carrying that much data in your pocket, you can get the same rush from a pair of SparQ cartridges—for a lot less cash.

The two optical drives in the group—Fujitsu's DynaMO 640 and Micro Solutions' backpack pd/cd—are underpowered and overpriced compared with the SyQuest and Iomega products. The backpack holds 650MB of data; the DynaMO, 640MB—relatively paltry amounts, especially considering the drives' prices: $269 for the backpack and a whopping $449 for the DynaMO. The DynaMO proved the faster of the two drives, but both fell way short of the performance delivered by the SyJet, the Jaz 2GB, and the SparQ. By the time this issue hits the street, Fujitsu will have replaced the DynaMO 640 with the DynaMO 640SE, which still holds only 640MB on each disc. It's cheaper at $349, but still pricey.

Easy Backup

Most people have to learn it the hard way. The company newsletter, the big sales presentation, your first novel—gone, wiped out, lost to some unexpected glitch in the system. Spare yourself the grief, rage, and eventual therapy that go with this scenario by avoiding it altogether. Buy yourself a reliable removable-storage device, and make regular backups.

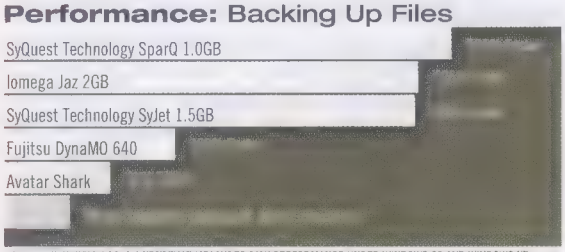
SparQs Fly For lightning-fast backup that doesn't cost a fortune, choose SyQuest's jack-of-all-trades SparQ 1.0GB drive. It connects via a standard EIDE interface so it's even fast enough to run your applications.

Backing up doesn't mean making a carbon copy of your hard drive—although with high-capacity devices like Iomega's Jaz 2GB, that's certainly an option. If that's what you have in mind, a tape-backup drive might be a better option. Tape drives store as much as 10GB on a single cassette—perfect for mirroring today's giant hard drives. But tape is slow, noisy, and less reliable than most removable storage. For quick, quiet, dependable backups of just your important files, check out the six drives we tested.

You need to consider several factors when choosing a backup device: price, capacity, durability, speed, and bundled software. Because these drives are intended for more than just backup chores (they're also ideal for file transfers and extending your storage space), not all of them come with the software that makes it simple to archive and restore data. Sure, you could just copy the files from your hard drive to the removable drive, but dedicated backup software keeps track of your selections, compresses the data, and lets you make incremental backups.

Most backup software also lets you schedule backups for specific times, like after you've left the office. If the removable drive is going to be chugging away when you're not around, speed isn't really an issue. Capacity, however, is. If you've got more data than will fit on, for example, an Avatar Shark 250MB cartridge, you'll need to be around to swap in a second or third cartridge when the software asks for it. Though there are exceptions to the rule, you want the highest-capacity removable drive your budget allows. If that also happens to be a speedy drive—one that can back up, say, 500MB in five minutes—then so much the better. For the record, every one of the devices we tested is a speed demon compared with tape drives.

Performance: Backing Up Files



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Blazing Backups The optical drives just couldn't keep up with the hard-disk–like devices from Iomega and SyQuest. Neither could the parallel-port Shark.

Built to Last The underlying technology behind a removable storage drive affects the durability and longevity of its media. Optical drives like the Fujitsu DynaMO 640 and the Micro Solutions backpack pd/cd, which use compact-disc–like platters, promise to preserve your data for at least 30 years. And their rewritable media are virtually indestructible, unlike the hard-drive–like cartridges used by the Avatar, Iomega, and SyQuest drives.

You can't put a price on the safety of your data, but you can buy the most economically balanced backup solution. The drive itself is a one-time purchase; it's the media that keep coming back to bite you in the wallet. The more data you have to archive, the more media you need to buy.

Of the six drives we tested—the Avatar Peripherals Shark 250 Pro, the Fujitsu DynaMO 640, the Iomega Jaz 2GB, the Micro Solutions backpack pd/cd, and the SyQuest Technology SparQ 1.0GB and SyJet 1.5GB—each offers something a little different. Our top pick is the $199 SparQ, which packs a full gigabyte (two, if you use compression) onto each $39 cartridge. Its software bundle even includes a backup utility and a slew of other titles. Did we mention it beat the pants off every other drive in our performance tests? Our only complaint is that the media aren't particularly rugged, but as long as you don't play office soccer with your backup cartridge, you'll be fine.

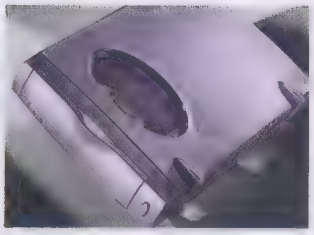
Iomega's Jaz 2GB ran a close second, however, and it stores twice as much data on each cartridge. It's an Ultra SCSI–based device, meaning you need a SCSI interface to run it, and it's not exactly a bargain at $499. Cartridges aren't cheap either: $125 each, or $300 for a three-pack. Still, you can archive an awful lot of data on a 2GB

TOP BACKUP DRIVES

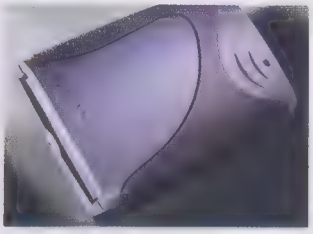
PRODUCT	Price/ Price of Media[2]	Capacity/ Cost per Megabyte	Interface Tested	Seek Time[3]	Verdict
PCComputing TEST **SyQuest Technology SparQ 1.0GB** (800) 245-2278 *InfoLink No. 602*	**$199/ $39 ($99 for 3-pack)**	1GB/ 3.8 cents	EIDE	12ms	☆☆☆☆☆ A rocket-powered drive that does much more than backup.
Iomega Corp. Jaz 2GB (800) 446-6342 *InfoLink No. 605*	**$499/ $125 ($300 for 3-pack)**	2GB/ 6.1 cents	Ultra SCSI	11ms	☆☆☆☆ The smart choice for mirroring your hard drive. But the price—ouch!
SyQuest Technology SyJet 1.5GB (800) 245-2278 *InfoLink No. 606*	**$299/ $79 ($199 for 3-pack)**	1.5GB/ 5.1 cents	SCSI	12ms	☆☆☆☆ Fast, affordable, and spacious. A runner-up to the SparQ in value.
Avatar Peripherals Shark 250 Pro (888) 462-8282 *InfoLink No. 603*	**$249/ $39 ($99 for 3-pack)**	250MB/ 15.6 cents	Parallel port	12ms	☆☆☆ Notebook users, look no further than this portable drive.
Fujitsu DynaMO 640 (800) 626-4686 *InfoLink No. 607*	**$449/ $20**	640MB/ 3.1 cents	SCSI	35ms	☆☆☆ Virtually indestructible media, but we wish it were bigger.
Micro Solutions backpack pd/cd (800) 890-7227 *InfoLink No. 608*	**$269/ $30**	650MB/ 4.6 cents	Parallel port	180ms	☆☆☆ A sturdy backup solution that also reads CD-ROMs, but a slowpoke.

[1]FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO WWW.PCCOMPUTING.COM/INFOLINK. [2]ESTIMATED STREET PRICE. [3]VENDOR'S STATS.

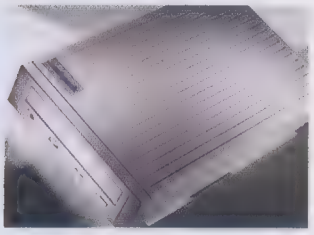
☆☆☆☆☆ EXCELLENT ☆☆☆☆ GOOD ☆☆☆ ACCEPTABLE ☆☆ POOR ☆ UNACCEPTABLE



Fast Forward Back up everything in record time with the speedy SyQuest SyJet.



Mobile Megabytes The ultracompact Avatar Shark 250 Pro is ideal for notebooks.



Roadworthy The backpack comes with the best backup software.

cartridge. And Iomega supplies a versatile, easy-to-use backup utility, making the Jaz 2GB a convenient out-of-box solution. SyQuest's $299 SyJet is another good choice. It's also speedy, and you can house up to 1.5GB on each $79 cartridge. But the media could be more durable.

The two optical drives we tested—the Micro Solutions backpack pd/cd and the Fujitsu DynaMO 640—provide the safest backups, as they use ultrasturdy disc media. The backpack stores up to 650MB on its $30 cartridges and has the added benefit of being able to read standard CD-ROMs. Plus, it comes with Seagate Backup Exec, a top-notch backup utility. Notebook users will appreciate the drive's parallel-port interface, which makes it easy to shuttle from one PC to another. And its $269 price tag is more than reasonable. Just one problem: It's the slowest drive here.

Meanwhile, the DynaMO is quite a bit faster than the backpack and it stores 640MB on 3.5-inch discs and requires a SCSI connection—even though it's an external drive. It's not quite as versatile as the backpack and it costs $180 more, but the media offset the price difference: They're just $20 each. To sweeten the deal, Fujitsu throws in a bare-bones backup program.

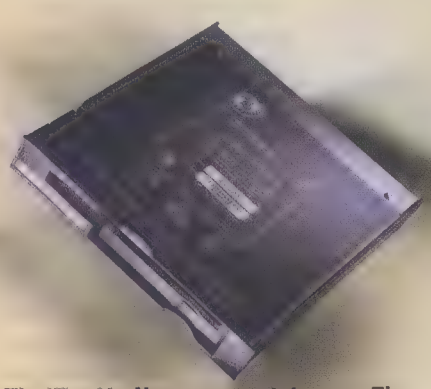
With its paltry 250MB cartridges, Avatar's Shark 250 Pro may not seem like a viable backup solution—unless you're a notebook user. Because notebooks typically have small hard drives, you may have less data to back up. A couple of 250MB cartridges might do the job. And the Shark's a natural for mobile users: It's compact and lightweight, nicely outfitted with software, and comes with parallel-port and PC Card cables. It draws power from whatever it's connected to, so you don't have to schlepp yet another power supply. It's fairly expensive at $249 for the drive and $39 per cartridge, which comes out to about 15 cents per megabyte. Avatar just needs to speed it up a bit; the Shark turned in the second-lowest performance scores of all the drives we tested.

Floppy Killers

The floppy is dead. R.I.P. It's fast being replaced by HiFD, CD-RW, DVD-RAM, DVD+RW, and a dozen other technologies (and acronyms) all vying to shovel the last scoop of dirt onto the 1.44MB floppy's grave. Will any of them become the industry standard? That remains to be seen. Here are the contenders to watch for.

We'll see 200MB floppies, Zip drives for notebooks, 2.1GB cartridges for $30, and DVD drives that can write as well as read. Actually, many of these devices will be available by the time you read this (though they weren't ready for testing as of press time), and the rest are just around the corner.

The device that might actually succeed in transplanting the floppy drive is . . . well, a bigger floppy drive. Sony's HiFD boasts 200MB disks and backward compatibility with today's 1.44MB floppies. No word yet on what the drive will cost, but it's a good bet Sony will price it competitively. Remember, this is the company that put 5.25-inch disks out to pasture with its 3.5-inch floppies.

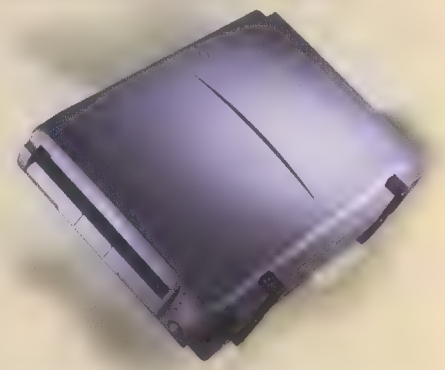


Zip 'Em Up **Now you can take your Zip disks on the road without extra bulk, thanks to new internal drives built especially for notebooks.**

Megabytes To Go Could HiFD spell doom for the venerable Zip drive? Maybe so, which is a shame considering that mobile users are finally getting in on the action. Both VST Technologies and CNF Portable Peripherals recently introduced internal Zip drives for notebooks from Compaq, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, and Toshiba. They fit into the notebook's drive bay, just like a modular CD-ROM or floppy drive. If a bay isn't available for your particular portable, there's an external Zip drive that's more universally compatible: the Addonics Technologies Pocket Zip, a slim, 13-ounce PC Card drive that runs off your notebook's battery. Iomega also hopes the Clik and its 40MB matchbook-size disks will become all the rage for notebooks as well as digital cameras, handheld PCs, and other handheld, digital consumer-electronic gadgets.

Of course, drives promising only megabytes of removable storage won't last long against new multi-gigabyte solutions, such as Castlewood Systems' Orb. An in-your-face challenger to SyQuest's SparQ, the $200 Orb delivers 2.16GB of storage on proprietary cartridges costing just $30 each. It should be available this fall. SyQuest, meanwhile, isn't letting the grass grow under its feet. Its new Quest drive packs a whopping 4.7GB on 5.25-inch disks and promises hard drive–caliber performance. At $599 it's $100 more than Iomega's Jaz 2GB—but you get more than twice the storage. We'll have to see how much the cartridges cost.

Dive into DVD Meanwhile, recordable drives are everywhere now. Hewlett-Packard's SureStore CD-Writer Plus is a CD-RW (rewritable) drive that stores 650MB of data on inexpensive CD media, and comes with software for producing custom audio and multimedia discs. However, this technology's already outdated. Recordable DVD drives are arriving at full steam, promising upwards of 3.6GB of storage. Just one problem: The same headaches plaguing DVD players—namely, competing standards—threaten to stall their writable counterparts. HP, Philips, and Sony are standing behind DVD+RW, while Hitachi, Panasonic, and Toshiba have adopted DVD-RAM. We'll buy the drives, but not until there's a unified standard.



Fat Floppy **Sony's 200MB HiFD drive could squash the 1.44MB floppy and 100MB Zip in one fell swoop. Plus it's backward-compatible with floppies.**

Gallons of Gigabytes **Castlewood Systems' Orb drive raises the removable storage bar to 2.16GB per cartridge. It promises to be cheap too.**

If there's a downside to this wealth of removable-storage options, it's the growing list of incompatible media. Each new technology brings with it a new kind of disk or cartridge, making it less likely you'll be able to share data with others.

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SUPER FLOPPY!

Maxell's SuperDisk.™ Works just like a floppy and stores 120 megabytes.

Leave it to Maxell to find a way to solve your storage needs in the future...without asking you to give up the past. The new SuperDisk Solution does just that with a 120MB diskette, and the new SuperDisk Drives that are totally compatible with the floppies you're already using. There's even a slim-line drive for laptops and notebooks.

Maxell's new SuperDisk is perfect for backing up your hard drive, consolidating reports, multimedia presentations...the list is endless.

SuperDisk is just one more example of the type of thinking you can expect from Maxell's Advanced Data Storage specialists. In the future, we'll be showing you many more. For details on SuperDisk or any other of Maxell's products, call 1-888-2-MAXELL. Check out our Website at www.maxell-data.com

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Storage for All

The floppy drive's day is done. Put your 3.5-inch disks to work as coasters and move up to something bigger and faster. Every drive here represents a monumental leap over the floppy, so whatever you choose will be a welcome improvement.

If you regularly need to move large files, Iomega's Zip Plus drive remains the most universally compatible choice. But the more attractive option is SyQuest's SparQ drive, which costs almost exactly the same and holds ten times as much data on each cartridge. It's a lot faster too. For sharing files within a company, go for the SparQ.

Likewise, get the SparQ if you're looking to expand your active storage space. This turbocharged drive is quick enough to run all but the most disk-intensive applications, and it's so affordable you'll want to buy two. The same goes for its older sibling, the SyQuest SyJet. For $100 more you get hard-drive performance from its 1.5GB cartridges.

Are you completely backed up? We didn't think so. Do it before something disastrous happens, and do it with a SparQ drive. It's your best bet in this category too, thanks to its large capacity, low price, and exceptional speed. If reliability and durability are top concerns, the Micro Solutions backpack pd/cd's optical media are virtually indestructible and last for decades. The drive isn't exactly speedy, but its parallel-port interface makes it a good choice for backing up data on multiple PCs.

Of course, you'll probably use your removable drive for more than one task. So what could be better than a single device that backs up your data, extends your hard drive, and lets you transport those giant files? How about one that costs less than $200? SyQuest's SparQ 1.0GB drive is the resounding choice. It's fast, affordable, versatile, and destined to become widely compatible.

Freelance writer RICK BROIDA *needs plenty of storage to hold* Tap, *his journal for PalmPilot users. Lab testing was performed by* JULI DAVIS *and* IBRAHIM GUL.

DECISION MAKER — CHOOSE THE BEST REMOVABLE STORAGE DEVICE FOR YOUR NEEDS

1 Choose the factor that's most important.	2 Choose the next most important factor.	3 What else is important?	4 For your needs, the best drive to buy is . . .
Move Large Files	Price	Performance	SyQuest SparQ 1.0GB
		Compatibility	Iomega Zip Plus
	Capacity	Performance	SyQuest SparQ 1.0GB
		Compatibility	Iomega Zip Plus
Run Applications	Price	Performance	SyQuest SparQ 1.0GB
		Compatibility	SyQuest SparQ 1.0GB
	Capacity	Performance	Iomega Jaz 2GB
		Compatibility	Iomega Jaz 2GB
Back Up	Price	Performance	SyQuest SparQ 1.0GB
		Durability	Micro Solutions backpack pd/cd
	Capacity	Performance	Iomega Jaz 2GB
		Durability	Iomega Jaz 2GB

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Powered by the 233MHz or 266MHz Intel Pentium® processor with MMX™ technology

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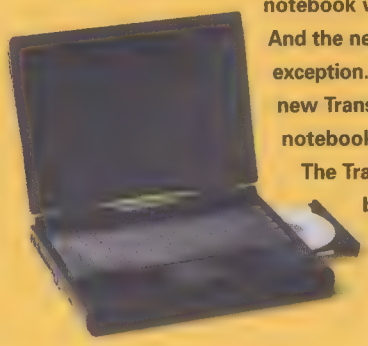
Designed for Microsoft® Windows® 95

MMX™ intel inside pentium® processor

THE NEW TRANSPORT TREK – RANKED #1 BY PC WORLD

"The TransPort Trek is the fastest budget notebook we've run through our mill"
-PC World, Ranked #1 April '98[11]

Geeks, experts and industry pundits all agree that Micron makes the world's best notebooks. We've won the coveted *PC Magazine* Editors' Choice award for practically every notebook we've ever released. And the new TransPort Trek is no exception. *PC World* just ranked the new TransPort Trek the #1 budget notebook available today.[1] The TransPort Trek is the single best desktop replacement notebook you can buy.



TransPort® Trek™

Common Features included on all TransPort Systems:

- 512KB L2 pipeline burst cache
- PCI bus with 128-bit graphics accelerator
- USB, parallel, serial, VGA, PS/2, ports
- S-Video Out; MPEG compatible
- CardBus and Zoomed Video ready
- Wavetable/3D Positional sound
- Microphone, stereo line-in & line-out jacks
- 2 Type II or 1 Type III PCMCIA slots
- 20X modular CD-ROM drive
- 2-way infrared port
- Touchpad pointing device
- Modular floppy drive
- Li-Ion battery
- Microsoft® Windows® 95 and Microsoft Plus!
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Trek 233	Trek 233	Trek 266
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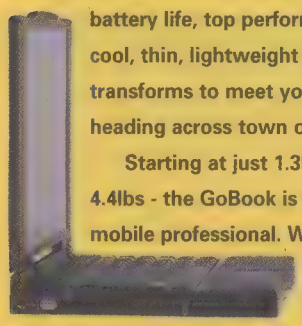

Starting at just 1.35" thin and weighing just 4.4lbs - the GoBook is the perfect notebook for the mobile professional. With its innovative modular battery design, the GoBook offers up to 11 hours of power.

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- 12.1" SVGA display
- PCI bus with 128-bit graphics
- USB, parallel, serial, VGA, PS/2, NTSC/S-Video, ports
- S-Video Out; MPEG compatible
- CardBus/Zoomed Video ready
- 16 bit stereo/Wavetable sound
- Microphone, stereo line in/out jacks
- 24X modular CD-ROM drive
- 2 Type II or 1 Type III PCMCIA slots
- 2-way infrared port
- Touchpad pointing device
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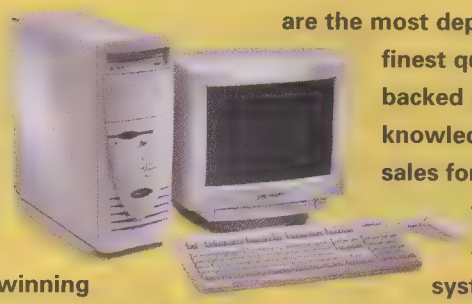

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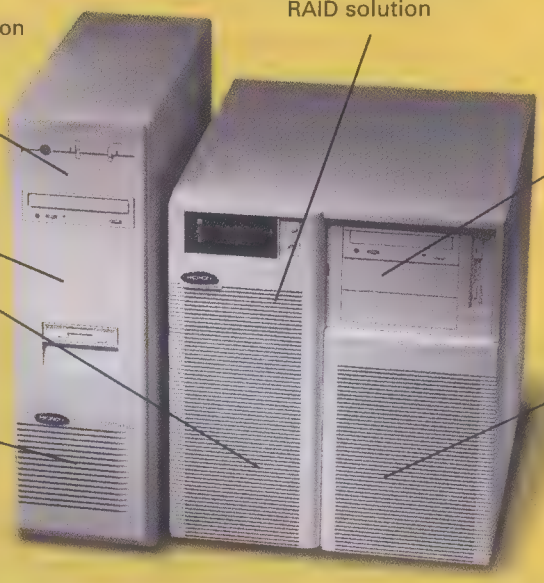

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- Intel LANDesk® Server Manager
- Dedicated server technical support, 7x24
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NetFRAME 3100

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- Dual processor capable
- 64MB ECC 100MHz SDRAM
- 4GB Ultra-Wide SCSI-3 hard drive
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- NOS support (3 first-year incident resolutions), 7x24
- Intel 440BX PCI chip set
- 512KB integrated L2 ECC cache
- 100MHz front side Bus
- Integrated Symbios Ultra-Wide SCSI-3 dual channel controller
- RAID capable
- 5 expansion slots: 3 PCI, 1 ISA, 1 shared PCI/ISA
- 8 drive bays: 1 external 3.5", 2 external 5.25"
- 5 hot-swap hard drive bays
- 32X EIDE CD-ROM drive
- Integrated SVGA graphics (2MB)
- Integrated Intel 10/100 Ethernet
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- Dual processor capable
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- Microsoft Windows NT Server 4.0 (10 user license)
- NOS support (3 first-year incident resolutions), 7x24
- 512KB integrated L2 ECC cache
- Memory: ECC, EDO or SDRAM option
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Easy Money

Surprise! Personal finance packages can run your business too. Here's how.

QUICKEN HOME & BUSINESS 98
Quicken finished just behind Microsoft Money in our usability tests, but it has all the features a SOHO business needs to manage its finances.

MONEY 98 FINANCIAL SUITE
Money's approach to onscreen help gives it some usability bragging rights over Quicken. But it lacks depth in business features, limiting its appeal to small businesses.

OK, so you've finally cashed in some of your dream stock to underwrite your own small or home business. Not that you've had much of a chance to savor the experience—you've never worked so hard in your life. And spare time? That's harder to find than clients who pay their bills in 30 days.

Ingrained habits like dumping receipts into a shoebox or waiting 45 days to get your account balance from a bank statement no longer pass for financial management. Now you've got to know where every penny is every day, and you don't have much time to devote to record-keeping.

BY MIKE HOGAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT HOUSER. PRODUCT PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK COMPTON.

Maybe it's time for a personal finance manager. For millions of small businesses, a full-fledged accounting package is overkill. For smaller outfits—mostly service businesses—a well-rounded finance package like Quicken Home & Business 98 or Microsoft Money 98 Financial Suite provides all the bookkeeping they need.

Bank on It Quicken, at $90, and Money, running $55, are the perfect answers for the don't-have-much-time, don't-have-much-money businessperson. They're known as two of the easiest-to-use financial programs ever created, and our usability tests prove their reputations still stand.

To get an idea of exactly how easy—or hard—it is for the average businessperson to go electronic with their finances, we tested both programs in *PC Computing*'s Usability Labs. We asked testers—businesspeople experienced with Windows but new to personal finance software—to complete a series of common financial tasks.

And the winner is . . . well, it wasn't that simple. Both products scored an amazing 8 out of a possible 10 on our Usability Index—which takes into account testers' satisfaction, productivity, and use of help in our tests—and earned our Usability Seal of Approval. So which should you buy? We'll get to that, but first you need to know what to expect when you turn over your business finances to such a package.

Balancing Act The average American adult juggles four bank accounts at two institutions, three credit cards,

USABILITY HIGHLIGHTS

SET UP FINANCES

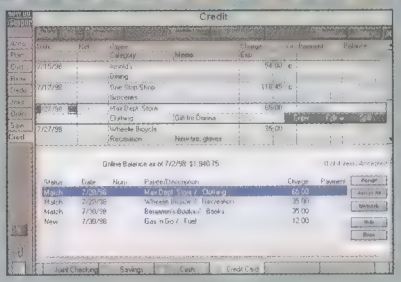
The toughest part of computer-based financial management is getting started. Both Quicken and Money lead you by the hand.

Quicken 98 ✓

In Quicken, testers found initial account setup procedures a little easier than Money's, but not much.

Money 98 ✓

Testers thought Money's list for assigning categories to transactions were more convenient than Quicken's.



Quicken's realistic transaction registers simplify data entry.

RECONCILE ACCOUNTS

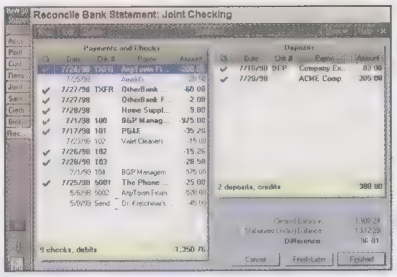
Electronic data downloads keep your account registers up-to-date painlessly. Quicken and Money do the math for you.

Quicken 98 ✓

Testers completed 100 percent of their account reconciliation tasks without consulting onscreen help.

Money 98 ✓

Money's Balance button is hard to find, but helpful onscreen instructions make up for this.



Settling statements is easy thanks to Quicken's split-screen approach.

RUN REPORTS

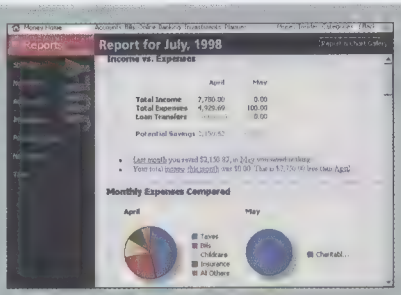
If you manage a small business, you need to know daily how your cash comes and goes.

Quicken 98 ✓

Quicken has more exhaustive and customizable business reports, but all the choices confused our testers.

Money 98 ✓

Money's all-in-one monthly report consolidates income, expenses, and net worth on a single screen.



Money brings all your financial data and reports onto one screen.

and assorted investments. Then, of course, there are plenty of bills to track—maybe a mortgage too. Add to that mix a greater transaction volume, budgets, cash-flow statements, and tax liabilities for various government agencies, and you have the basic small-business financial profile.

For either yourself or your business, Quicken and Money show you how to keep a precise reading on your cash flow, assets, and investments; alert you to upcoming liabilities; and give you a head start on your tax record-keeping and preparation.

What keeps most people from committing to a financial management program, however, is a reluctance to spend time entering transaction data into computerized account registers—even though this is clearly easier than penciling it into various checkbook registers and account records. But the online banking and bill-paying features in Quicken and Money take that burden off your shoulders. You can update computerized account registers in minutes with a quick modem dial-in to your bank any time of the day or night. And a few more mouse clicks send off a batch of bill payments during the same online session.

Getting Started In either program, expect to spend an hour or two setting up your accounts and signing up with your financial institution for online banking and bill-paying. Procedures and fees for online banking differ from institution to institution but are generally less than $10 a month. And both Quicken and Money have

TRACK INVESTMENTS/FORECAST

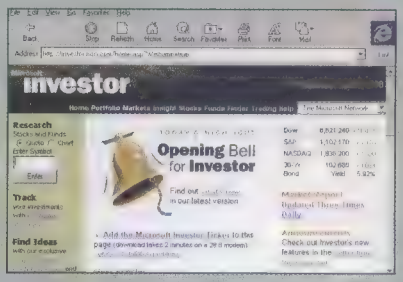
Both Quicken and Money let you track investments over the Internet at their extensive Web sites.

Quicken 98

Despite—or maybe because of—Quicken's bounty of options for tracking investments, testers weren't able to complete their tasks.

Money 98

Money's investment Web sites and onscreen help give some guidance, but not enough for testers to accomplish advanced tasks.



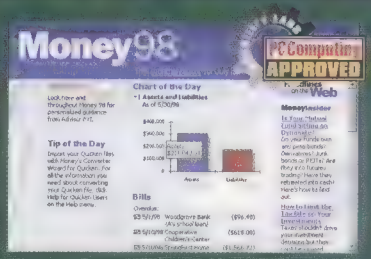
Testers had difficulty tracking investments in both Money (above) and Quicken.

USABILITY BOTTOM LINE

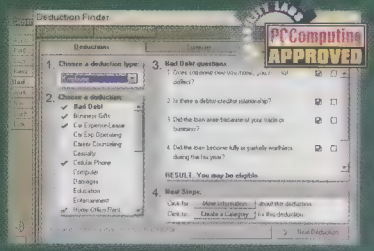
Both Money 98 and Quicken Home & Business earned *PC Computing*'s Usability Seal of Approval. Testers completed financial management tasks 89 percent of the time in Money, and 88 percent of the time in Quicken. User satisfaction scores were similarly high, with a slight edge for Quicken.

Testers finished the most basic financial tasks with ease. But more advanced activities, like business forecasting, investment tracking, and data retrieving from financial Web sites, were tough enough that neither product earned a passing mark in these critical areas.

Our testers expressed virtually identical levels of satisfaction with both products. However, they were more successful at getting answers from Money's onscreen help than they were when using the same feature in Quicken.



World at Your Fingertips Money gives you a complete financial picture, alerting you to problem areas that need attention.



No More Taxing Taxes Testers thought Quicken's Help lagged behind Money's, but they liked Quicken's tax-deduction feature.

friendly setup routines that carefully walk you through the early stages of computerizing your books.

After the initial setup, you'll rarely have to write a check by hand or mess with calculators, out-of-date bank statements, or checkbook registers to settle your accounts. Quicken and Money do the math while updating your account registers.

Once you have several months of transaction data at hand, Quicken and Money use this information to create monthly budgets, cash-flow forecasts, debt-reduction schedules, and savings plans. Quicken has a built-in invoice generator that makes it easy to track any partial payments and credits on resulting receivables.

Both programs let you track reimbursable business expenses—out-of-pocket expenses for which the business pays you back—and create quick reports that detail your tax-related transactions. And Quicken and Money have seamless connections to financial Web sites that give you advice and professional help.

If any or all of these concepts are foreign to you, relax: Quicken and Money are full of tutorials and onscreen help. They hold your hand through each new feature, and often pop up useful tips on how you can work faster and smarter.

Living Proof So how did these programs fare in the hands of small-business owners in our Usability Labs? Testers set up new checking, savings, and credit-card accounts; reconciled the accounts with bank statements; and created common business documents. Finally, we asked testers to do a few more-sophisticated activities, like tracking investments, creating budgets, and making financial forecasts.

After rounding a short learning curve, our testers breezed through the basic tasks in both programs. From Quicken's familiar checkbook interface to Money's quick category lists, both had plenty of smart features to help get the job done. But while Money is more than adequate for basic financial tasks, Quicken goes extra steps toward managing a small business by offering a greater selection of business-oriented forms and reports.

CHECKLIST

	Quicken 98	Money 98
Online bill-paying	✓	✓
Links to tax packages/ tax estimator	✓	✓
Tax-deduction finder/ business tax tracking	✓	
Advanced business reports	✓	
Reimbursable expense tracking	✓	✓
Integrated invoicing and receivable tracking	✓	

Important Extras Both Quicken and Money are user friendly and full featured, with all the tools to help manage your small or home business.

Just as both products excelled at the same basic activities, they fell short in the same places. Our testers stumbled when it came to tracking investments and researching loans—more advanced activities that few people perform and still fewer understand.

We're tempted to let Intuit and Microsoft off the hook here. You could easily argue that our testers' difficulty had as much to do with the tasks' sophistication as with the software. But both companies have played up the ease with which the average person can navigate their program screens, tools, and financial Web pages. Not so, not yet. So put up or shut up, guys. Nobody pays for good intentions.

If you're willing to devote extra time to learning the complete products, you'll get great results from Quicken or Money. Every small business needs one or the other—Money, if your needs are simple, and Quicken, if you require an extra dose of business smarts.

Top Financial Packages

PRODUCT	Price**	Unique Features	Pros	Cons	Verdict
PCComputing BEST **Intuit Quicken Home & Business 98** (800) 446-8848 *InfoLink No. 745*	**$90**	Integrated invoicing and receivable tracking; tax-deduction finder; Emergency Records Organizer.	Lots of business-oriented reports; easy to use; tax tracking; unlimited, free Web content.	Middling onscreen help; a bit pricey.	☆☆☆☆☆ **A personal finance manager that challenges double-entry accounting programs.**
Microsoft Money 98 Financial Suite (800) 426-9400 *InfoLink No. 746*	**$55**	Intelligent prompts from an integrated monthly report on problem areas.	Very easy to use; great onscreen help; enticing price.	Limited business-specific features; you eventually pay for Web content.	☆☆☆☆ **Good choice for families and novice investors.**

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Your Bottom Dollar

Both Intuit Quicken Home & Business and Microsoft Money help you manage your money with ease. But not all small businesses are created equal—some need more help than others. In our Usability Labs testing, we found when it comes to daily financial management, Quicken and Money are neck and neck. However, Quicken is a better choice for business users because of its greater depth and flexibility.

While Money's simplicity makes it an appealing product for the home user, a business user will appreciate Quicken's wider selection of business-oriented forms and reports. Small or service-oriented enterprises will do fine with Money's automatically generated balance sheets, income statements, budget reports, and other basic business reports. But Quicken goes on to provide reports for higher-volume business, such as accounts payable by vendor, accounts receivable by customer, and job costing.

Also Quicken lets you create invoices and track the resulting receivables until payments are tucked away in your checking account.

In many cases Quicken gets the nod—not because it has features that Money lacks, but because it does a better job. For example, both programs offer ways to track reimbursable business expenses. But Quicken integrates expensable notations into its account registers and lets you specify different tax treatments for different expenses.

And Money offers something comparable to Quicken's tax summary and tax schedule reports, but Quicken's reports are more complete and customizable. Plus Quicken adds a tax-deduction finder that gives you a leg up on Uncle Sam.

Both Quicken and Money are easy to use and more efficient at tracking your business finances than by hand. If your small business is truly small, Money's tools will do the job. But if you have Gates-size business aspirations, you may as well learn Quicken now.

Lab testing was performed by LULIT BEZUAYEHU, ANDRE LEACH, *and* JASON TOATES.

DECISION MAKER CHOOSE THE RIGHT **FINANCIAL PACKAGE** FOR YOUR NEEDS

1 Choose the factor that's most important.	2 Choose the next most important factor.	3 What else is important?	4 For your needs, the best program is . . .
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		Personalized Guidance	Microsoft Money
	Features	Business Form Selection	Quicken Home & Business
		Personalized Guidance	Quicken Home & Business
Price	Usability	Business Form Selection	Microsoft Money
		Personalized Guidance	Microsoft Money
	Features	Business Form Selection	Quicken Home & Business
		Personalized Guidance	Microsoft Money
Features	Usability	Business Form Selection	Quicken Home & Business
		Personalized Guidance	Microsoft Money
	Price	Business Form Selection	Quicken Home & Business
		Personalized Guidance	Microsoft Money

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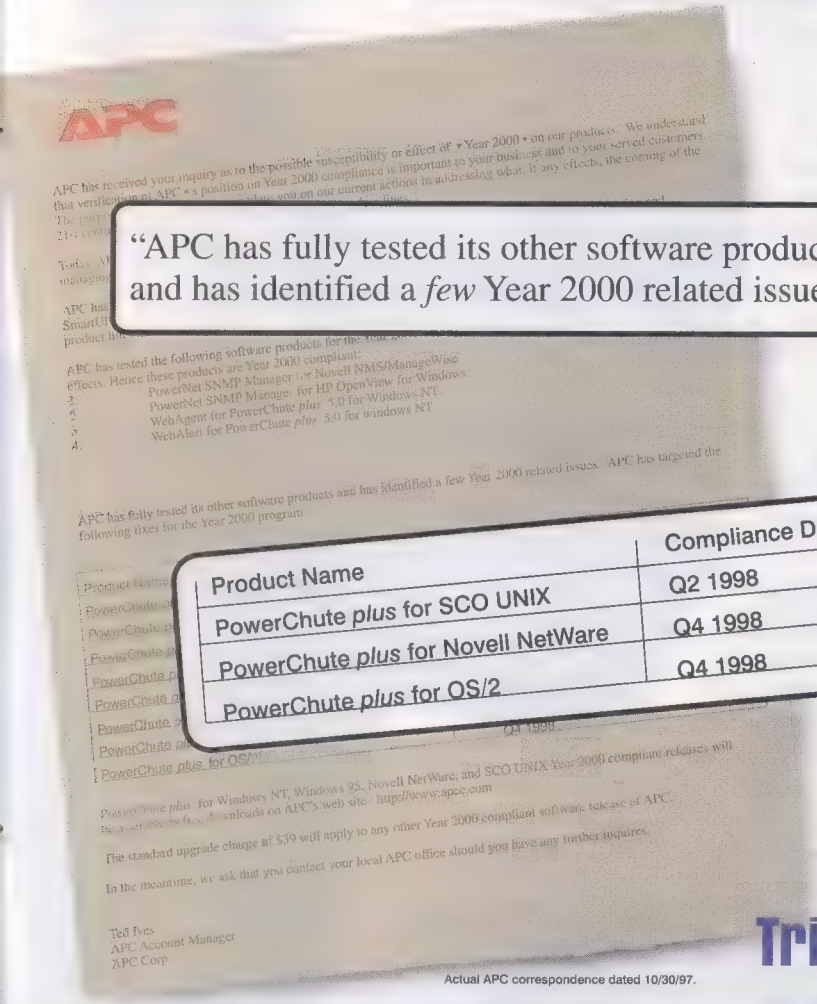

APC has received your inquiry as to the possible susceptibility or effect of "Year 2000" on our products. We understand that verification of APC's position on Year 2000 compliance is important to your business and to your served customers. The coming of the 21st century ... APC has fully tested its other software products and has identified a few Year 2000 related issues. APC has targeted the following fixes for the Year 2000 program

APC has tested the following software products for the Year 2000 effects. Hence these products are Year 2000 compliant:

1. PowerNet SNMP Manager for Novell NMS/ManageWise
2. PowerNet SNMP Manager for HP OpenView for Windows
3. WebAgent for PowerChute *plus* 5.0 for Windows NT
4. WebAlert for PowerChute *plus* 5.0 for windows NT

Product Name	Compliance Date
PowerChute *plus* for SCO UNIX	Q2 1998
PowerChute *plus* for Novell NetWare	Q4 1998
PowerChute *plus* for OS/2	Q4 1998

PowerChute *plus* for Windows NT, Windows 95, Novell NetWare, and SCO UNIX Year 2000 compliant releases will be available for free downloads on APC's web site: http://www.apcc.com

The standard upgrade charge of $39 will apply to any other Year 2000 compliant software release of APC.

In the meantime, we ask that you contact your local APC office should you have any further inquires.

Ted Ives
APC Account Manager
APC Corp

Actual APC correspondence dated 10/30/97.

"APC has fully tested its other software products and has identified a *few* Year 2000 related issues."

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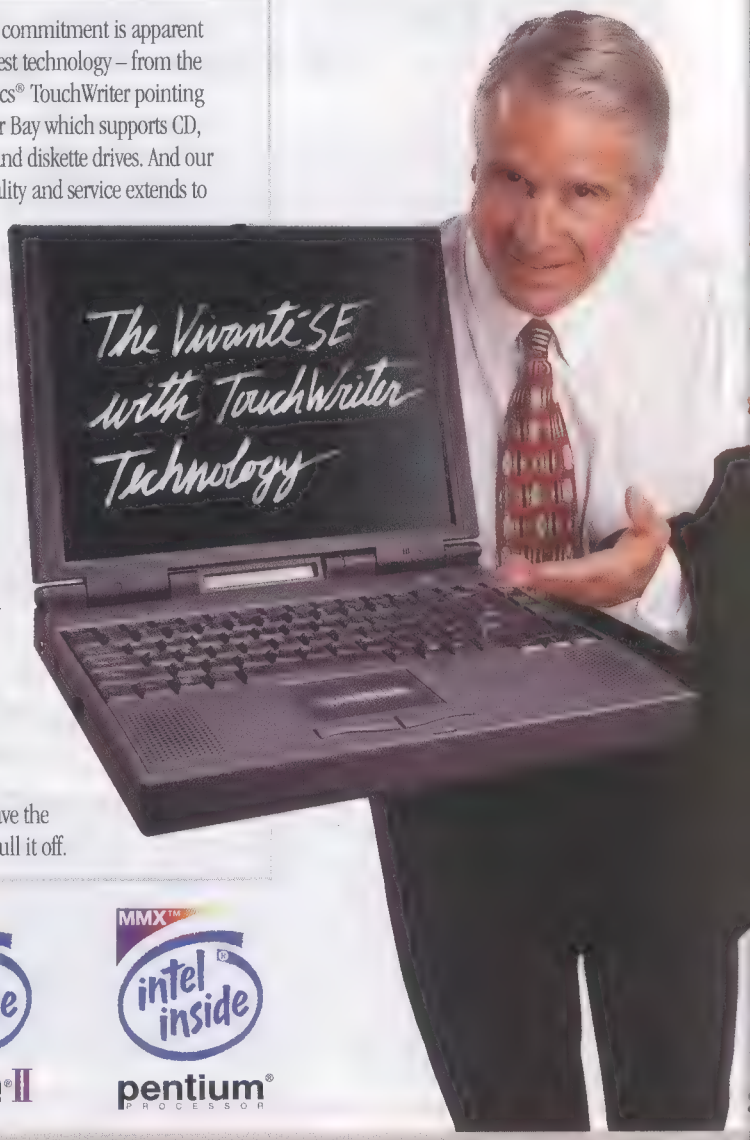

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Foolproof Win98 Upgrade

Windows 98 is finally here, and it's time to upgrade! Installing Windows 98 on a Windows 95 PC isn't tough; just follow the Setup Wizard. But when the wizard stops, your job has just begun. Here's how to make your upgrade as safe as possible, plus some undocumented tweaks you can't afford to miss.

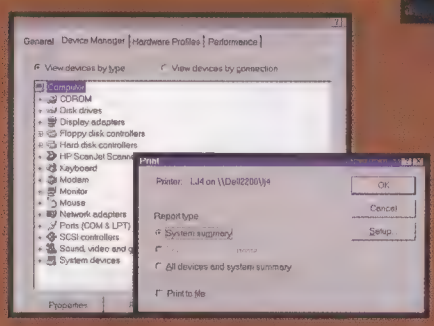
1. Obey the wizard. Approach any operating system upgrade cautiously. The transition from Windows 95 to Windows 98 is no exception. Before you start the upgrade, back up all your vital data files. Take a snapshot of your system settings (Start, Settings, Control Panel, System, Device Manager, Print, System Summary). When the wizard tells you to make an emergency startup disk, follow the instructions to the letter. You'll start and restart a few times, then end up with a clean Windows 98 installation.

2. Test the emergency startup disk. In theory, the emergency startup disk you create during Windows 98's installation will let you boot your PC and work in DOS even if your hard drive crashes. In practice, though, the CD-ROM drive may not work after the emergency startup disk boots to DOS. To fix shortcomings like these, take the following steps once you've installed Windows 98: Shut down your PC (select Start, Shut Down, Shut Down), put the emergency startup disk in the A: drive, and push your PC's reset button. Once the system starts up again, choose Option 1, Start Computer with CD-ROM Support. If your CD-ROM drive is working correctly (you'll see a message like the one in the screen in Step 2 below), you can breathe a sigh of relief and go on to Step 4.

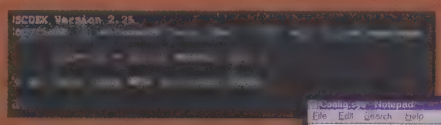
3. Fix the emergency startup disk. So Windows 98's emergency startup disk didn't recognize your CD-ROM drive? Welcome to the club. Far better that you discover the problem now rather than six months from now, when your system is on its knees. The culprit? The emergency startup disk uses a generic real-mode CD-ROM driver, OAKCDROM.SYS, that works for many but not all CD drives. To get your startup disk working, you have to go back through your CD-ROM drive's documentation and find its real-mode driver. When you find the driver (you may need to call the drive manufacturer), copy it onto your emergency startup disk. Then use a text editor such as Notepad to change your CONFIG.SYS file so it uses this driver. Keep testing the disk until it works.

4. Ditch DriveSpace. Now that you've gotten your emergency startup disk to recognize the CD-ROM drive, it's time to work on the hard drive. Disk-compression software—including Windows 95's DriveSpace—isn't nearly as effective as Windows 98's new FAT32 file system. Using DriveSpace on a typical Windows 95 (FAT16) hard drive, you might be able to squish your file size down by 30 to 40 percent or so. FAT32 isn't nearly as frugal—expect a 20 to 30 percent savings. But the difference is speed: Microsoft built some very clever optimizers into Windows 98 that make FAT32 drives run much faster than old-fashioned compressed drives. Before you can convert a drive to FAT32, though, it must be uncompressed. To uncompress a DriveSpace drive, run DriveSpace (select Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, DriveSpace). Choose the drive you want to uncompress; click on Drive, Uncompress; and pick up a good book. A large drive can take hours to uncompress. You may get a DriveSpace warning if

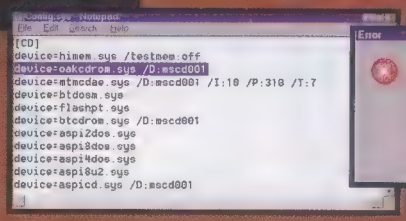
(continued on page 212)



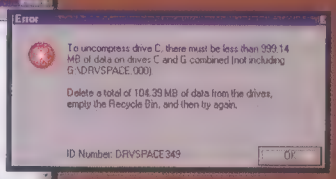
Step 1 Windows 95's System Summary gives a printed report on where your system stands before you upgrade. This list will come in handy if you hit a snag.



Step 2 Run the emergency startup disk to make sure you can get at your CD-ROM drive if Windows 98 won't start. If the drive is working, you should see an MSCDEX message that looks like this.



Step 3 To change the real-mode CD-ROM driver on your emergency startup disk, delete the device=oakcdrom.sys line (highlighted here) and type in the device= line recommended by your CD-ROM drive manufacturer.



Step 4 Watch for this DriveSpace warning if you have too much data to uncompress. You must move or delete enough data to allow the uncompress routine to continue.

Foolproof Win98 Upgrade (continued from page 211)

you have too much data on your system to run the uncompress routine. If so, it's up to you to move or delete data so the uncompress routine can finish.

5. Nuke Windows 95. If you've had Windows 95 around for a long time—say, since its debut back in the summer of '95—we recommend getting rid of it altogether, particularly if you've installed and uninstalled lots of applications or hardware and are worried that the dregs of those programs and drivers might one day come back to haunt your new Windows 98 system. You'll thank us if you do it now. Jump to "Wipe Out Windows 95" (page 216), then come back here when you're done.

6. Convert to FAT32. Once you've uncompressed your drive, you need to convert it. Hard drives work much better under Windows 98 if they're converted to FAT32. On the downside, converted drives can be accessed only by Win98—so if you have a dual-boot system (one that can boot to either Windows 98 or NT), this process can cause all sorts of headaches. To convert a drive, click on Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Drive Converter (FAT32), then follow the wizard.

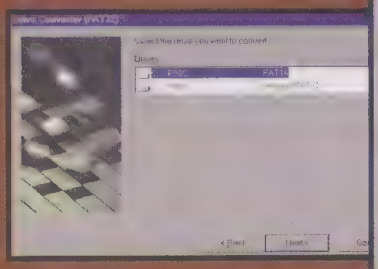
7. Fine-tune your settings. Now that Windows 98 is installed, you need to change some key settings to get the most out of it. Many of the default settings will drive advanced users nuts. To be sure that Windows Explorer shows you all the files on your hard drive (and their full names), right-click on My Computer; choose Explore; click on View, Folder Options; then click on the View tab. Uncheck the box marked Hide File Extensions for Known File Types, and under Hidden Files check Show All Files. Win98 sets aside 10 percent of the space on each hard drive for the Recycle Bin; for most folks that's too much. Change it by right-clicking on the Recycle Bin, choosing Properties, and sliding the bar down to 5 percent or so.

8. Create a system snapshot. While Windows 95 has the Control Panel's System applet to tell you which devices and drivers are installed on your system, Win98 goes ten giant steps forward with a utility called System Information. Thankfully, Microsoft put System Information on the Start menu instead of hiding it under an obscure tab in a backwater dialog box. To run it, click on Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, System Information, and print a full report. (Expect it to run about 50 pages.) Store the report in a safe place so you can refer to it later.

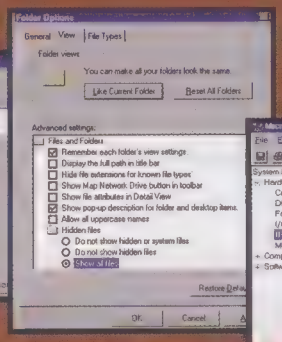
9. Register for Windows Update. Finally, be sure to register your new Windows—it's more important than with previous versions. The new Windows Update program automates minor improvements (read: bug fixes) to Windows 98 via the Web, and it's available only to people who register. The ability to download the latest files from one centralized source is a major improvement. The easiest way to do this is by clicking on the Register Now button on Windows 98's Welcome screen. (If you've already done away with this screen, click on Start, Run; type welcome; and press Enter.) Once you've registered, drop by the Windows Update area on the Web (Start, Windows Update) and make sure it's all working for you.

Contributing Editor Woody Leonhard has written more than a dozen books on Windows and Microsoft Office. Woody's Office Watch (WOW), his free weekly electronic newsletter, offers late-breaking coverage of topics like the ones you see here. Subscribe to WOW by sending a blank message to wow@wopr.com.

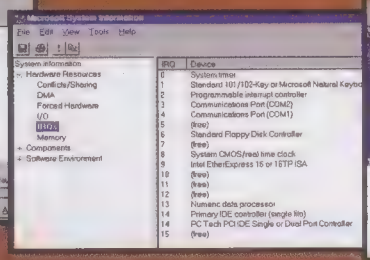
Edited by Liesl La Grange Noble.



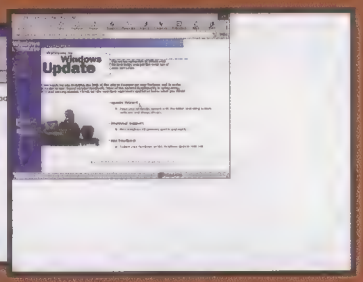
Step 6 Use Windows 98's FAT32 converter to convert your hard drive. Allow a half hour or so for a moderate-size (1GB or smaller) drive, and be aware that Win98 will defragment the drive at the very end of the conversion process.



Step 7 Set Windows Explorer to display all the files on your hard drives and their full names.



Step 8 Run Windows 98's System Information utility to get an up-to-date report on your system.



Step 9 Register and you'll get tech support and automatic updates to Windows 98 from Microsoft's Windows Update site—all from one central source.

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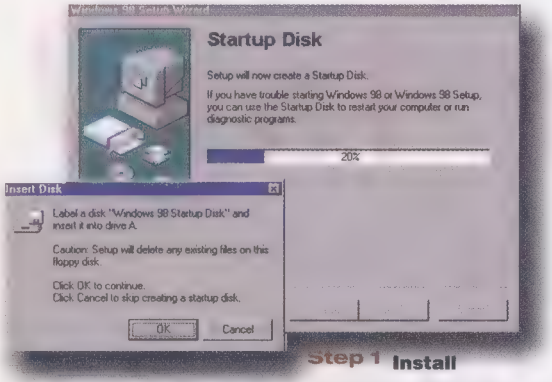
Infolink 245 at: www.pccomputing.com/infolink

By Woody Leonhard

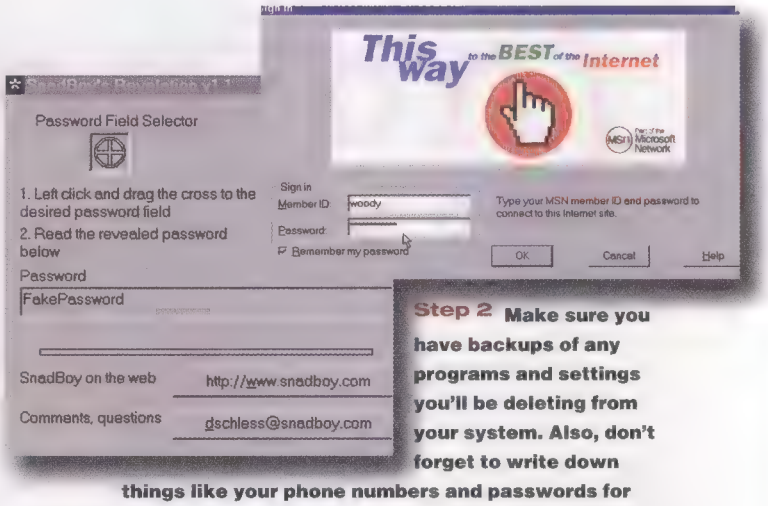
For more Windows tips and tricks, head to www.pccomputing.com

Wipe Out Windows 95

To get the cleanest possible Windows 98 installation, it's a good idea to get rid of Windows 95 after you've installed the new operating system. To do so you'll need to wipe your hard drive clean of all applications and data, including leftover Win95 files floating around in C:\Windows and other, less easily identified places. Be sure to have your old Win95 or 3.1 CD or disks handy. You'll also be able to prune obsolete Windows 95 settings from the Registry.



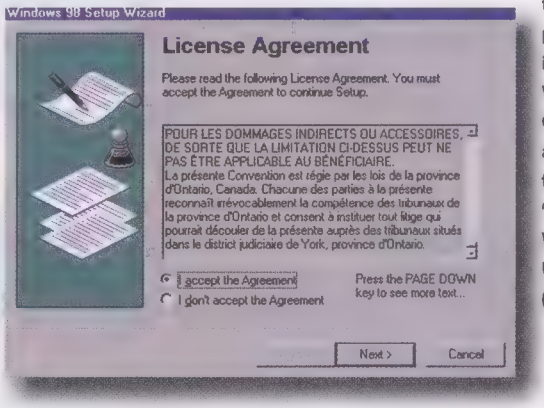
Step 1 **Install Windows 98, debug the emergency Windows 98 Startup Disk, and uncompress any compressed drives by following the first four steps in "Foolproof Win98 Upgrade" (page 211).**



Step 2 **Make sure you have backups of any programs and settings you'll be deleting from your system. Also, don't forget to write down things like your phone numbers and passwords for online services. Forget a password? Use SnadBoy's Revelation 1.1 to retrieve it (go to www.snadboy.com/RevelationDL.html for download and details).**

Step 3 **Restart your PC with the emergency startup disk, and triple-check to be sure your CD-ROM drive is working. When you're ready to take the plunge, type FDISK to reset the hard drive partition(s), then format each drive with the FORMAT C: command.**

Step 4 **Moving directly from the FORMAT C: command, once again install Windows 98 from the CD-ROM, and run Setup. (Don't reboot or try to move or copy any files.) The Windows 98 Setup Wizard should kick in. Follow all the way through the setup process, insert your Win95 or 3.1 CD or disks if asked, then go to Step 6 of "Foolproof Win98 Upgrade" (page 212).**



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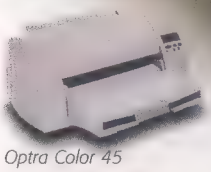
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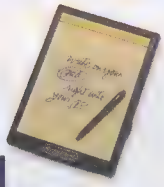

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EX700
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5 Software Packages Awarded
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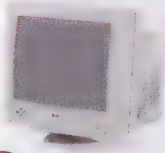

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MultiSync A700
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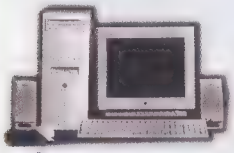

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1 System Awarded
Value: $1,099

Velocity 128
3 Multimedia Accelerators Awarded
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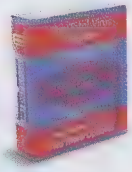

In-Defense
5 Software Packages Awarded
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TigerDirect PC Cinema
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By Ron White
Illustration by Timothy Edward Downs

Ron White and Timothy Edward Downs are the author and principal illustrator of How Computers Work (ISBN 1-56276-546-9)—with CD-ROM (ISBN 0-7897-1650-X). Que, (800) 428-5331.

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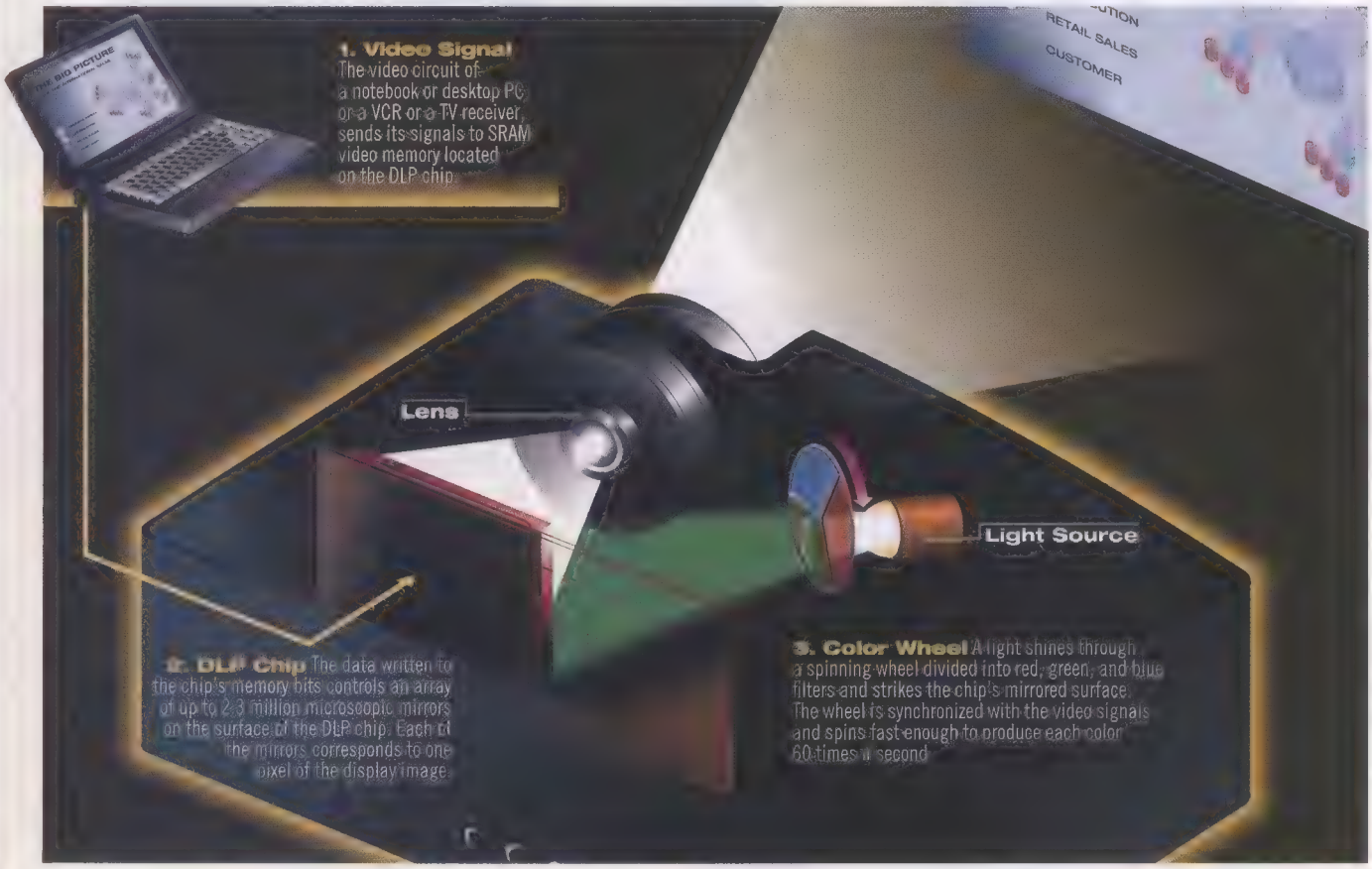
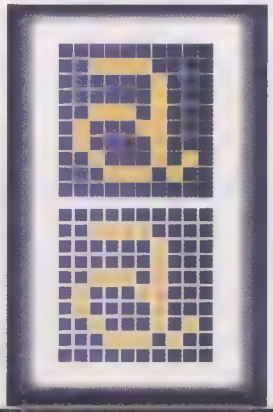
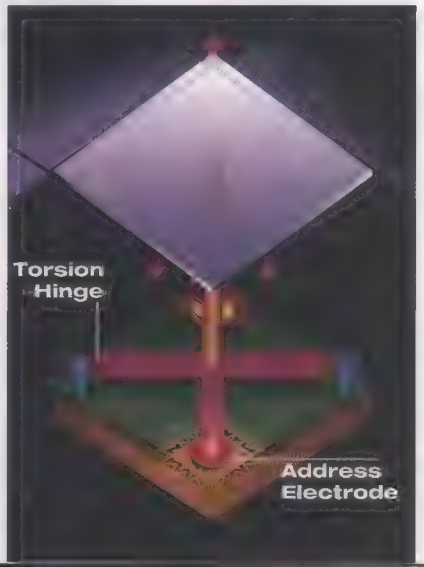
Big, bulky presentation projectors are slimming down thanks to Texas Instruments' Digital Light Processing (DLP) chip. It means brighter, sharper images than with traditional LCD projector equipment—less expensive too. Conference rooms aren't the only place you'll see DLP either. Look for the chips to drive tomorrow's home theater systems too.



Overview **A DLP chip projects an image made up of red, green, and blue light alternately striking a mirrored surface. Millions of tiny mirrors move to reflect the light and create the image on a projection screen.**



DLP vs. LCD **The gap between the mirrors in a DLP chip is smaller than the gap between pixels in an LCD screen, creating a sharper image. And brighter because the light doesn't pass through an LCD's filter.**



Millions of Mirrors

When a 1 bit is written to memory to turn on a pixel, the electrical charge passes through to one of two address electrodes positioned beneath opposite corners of each mirror. The charge pulls down one corner of the mirror so the light is reflected on the projection screen.

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Office 97 Secrets

More people use Microsoft Office 97 than any other application in the history of computers. But Office isn't exactly perfect. As anyone who's used it for more than a week can tell you, more people swear at Office, get gray hair over Office, and threaten to throttle Office's tech support reps than any other application around. It doesn't have to be this hard. Here are some of the most coveted secrets of the Office 97 gurus,

By Woody Leonhard

For more tips and tricks, head to www.pccomputing.com

starting with the newly discovered bugs that every user should know about.

Office 97 Service Release 1 Late last year Microsoft released the mother of all Office 97 bug fixes, called Service Release 1. SR1 offers hundreds of fixes—some of them are significant, some trivial. But there's one overwhelming reason why every Office 97 user should upgrade to SR1: A subtle change in the Word 97 macro language keeps a very large percentage of Word viruses from propagating under SR1. You won't find that fact documented anywhere (Microsoft resists making any claims about this new feature), but this change is nothing less than spectacular.

That's the good news about SR1. The bad news? SR1 has some major flaws. The one new feature you'll find most irritating is Word 97 SR1's insistence on popping up the Office Assistant whenever you save a document for the first time. That damned paper clip says, "Other people may not have the latest version of Office, so if you plan to share this file, you should save it in the following format: Word 6.0/95." You must then click on Don't Use Suggested Format to clear out the message. Believe me, we've tried to get rid of the bloody thing by futzing with obscure settings, macros, and bazookas. No luck.

Just to make things challenging, Microsoft released two different products called SR1. You want the SR1 Enterprise Update CD, if you can get it (this will depend on whether you have an OEM version of Office). For complete details on getting SR1, check out www.zdnet.com/zdhelp/nonzd/woodys98/sr1.

Office 97 Power Tip If you're using Windows 98 (or using Windows 95 with Internet Explorer 4.0 or later), get rid of the Office Shortcut Bar. The new Windows/IE Taskbar icon tray, located immediately to the right of the Start button, does much the same thing and sits in a more convenient location. To move shortcuts from the Office Shortcut Bar to the Taskbar icon tray, launch Windows Explorer (right-click on My Computer and choose Explore), and navigate to C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office\Shortcut Bar to find shortcuts currently on your Office Shortcut Bar. Click on any shortcut you'd like to move, and drag it onto the Taskbar icon tray. To get rid of a shortcut, right-click on any blank spot on the Office Shortcut Bar and choose Exit. When asked if you want the bar to run when Windows restarts, just click on No.

Word 97 Print Bug Be on the lookout for a data-destroying print bug in all versions of Word. To avoid the bug, make sure to save a file before you print it. If you don't, Word closes the document *without saving your changes*. That can be quite a shock if you don't save often. (Strangely, the modified version of the document will print fine.)

As we went to press, Microsoft had updated its Knowledge Base to acknowledge the bug (support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q182/8/37.asp), but had not yet announced a fix.

E-Z REGISTRY REDO OUTLOOK SETTINGS

[illegible]

Step 1 To launch the Registry Editor, select Start, Run, then type regedit and press Enter.

Step 2 Click on HKEY_CURRENT_USER, then select Software, Microsoft, Office, 8.0, Outlook.

Step 3 Delete the Outlook key, then restart Outlook 98. The program will open with nearly all its settings restored to their original condition, no matter how much you've fiddled with them. This is a must-have tip for those who love to tinker away with settings.

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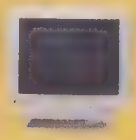

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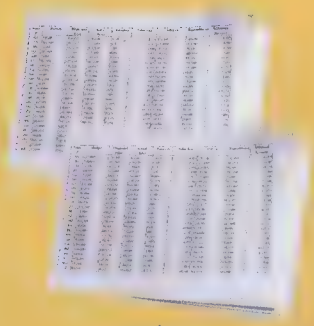

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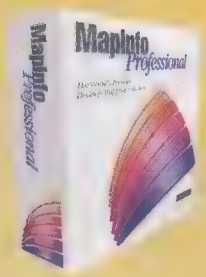

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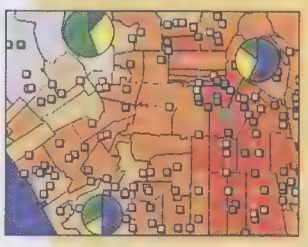

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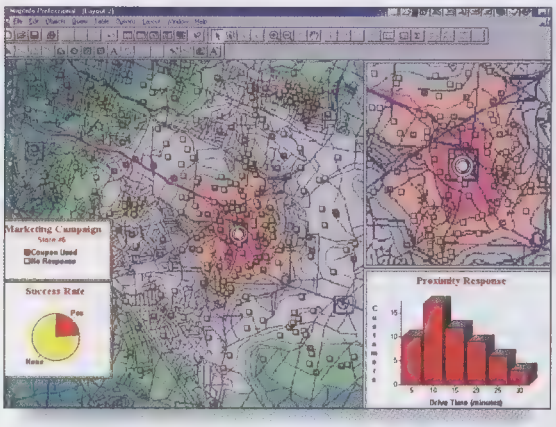

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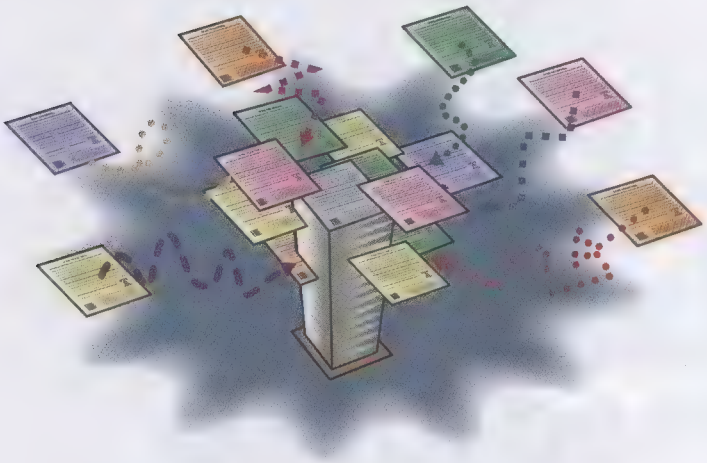

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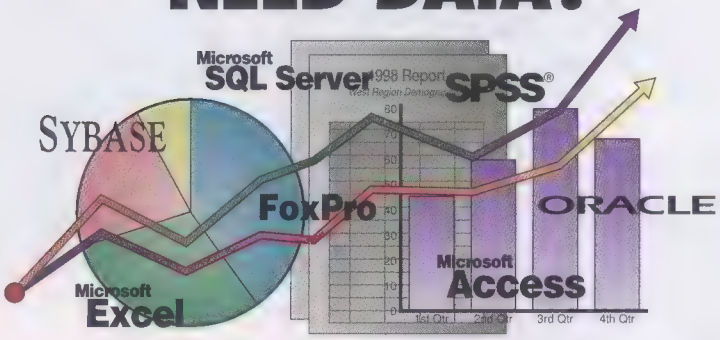

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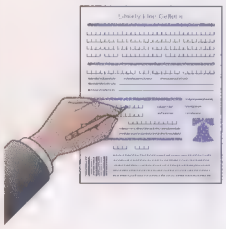

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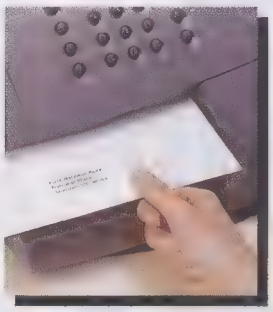

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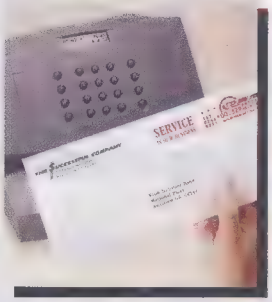

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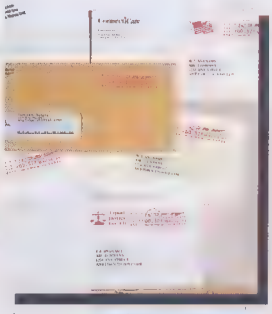

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#25786	1592DMT	233MHz MMX*	32	3.1GB	20X	12.1" TFT	56K	$2,849
Armada 7300 Series								
#24711	7360DMT	200MHz MMX*	32	3.0GB	20X	12.1" TFT	33.6K	$3,279
#24712	7370DMT	233MHz MMX*	32	4.0GB	20X	12.1" TFT	33.6K	$3,699
#26787	7380DMT	266MHz MMX*	32	4.0GB	20X	12.1" TFT	33.6K	$3,989
Armada 7700 Series								
#23932	7770DMT	233MHz MMX*	32	3.0GB	20X	12.1" TFT	33.6K	$3,419
#26789	7792DMT	266MHz MMX*	32	5GB	20X	13.3" TFT	33.6K	$4,449
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#31073	7800	PII 266MHz MMX*	64	5.0GB	20X	13.3" TFT	—	$4,949
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#31673	PII 266MHz MMX*	32	3.2GB	—	TD	Win®95	$1,199
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#27806	8338	300MHz PII	32MB	8GB	32X	—	$1,899
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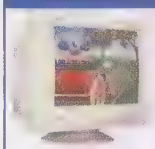

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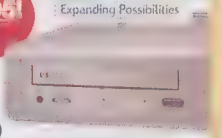

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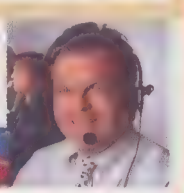

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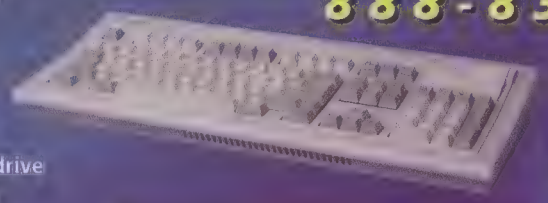

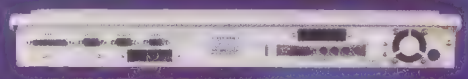

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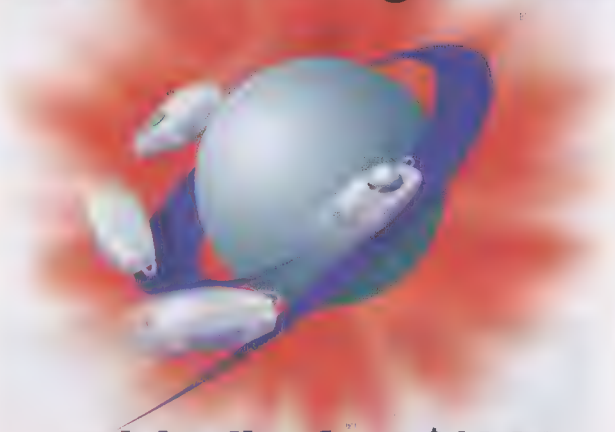

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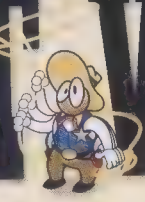

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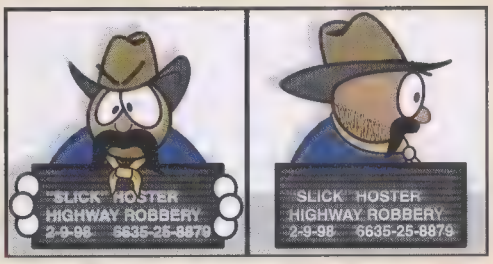

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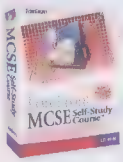

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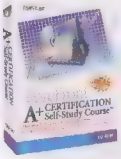

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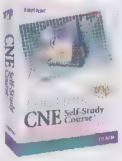

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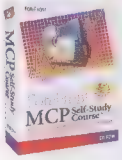

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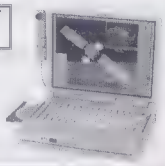

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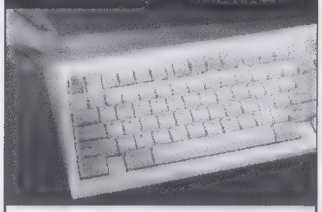

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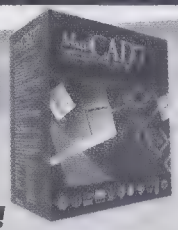

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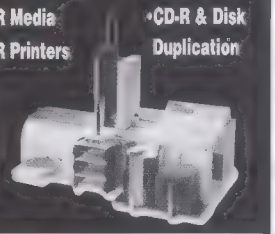

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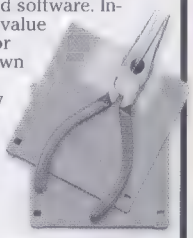

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PCComputing

Turn It Up to Eleven

The experts say sounds in Windows are even worse than screen savers at wasting time. I don't want to hear it. What I want to hear is Daffy and Taz, rude Monty Python quips, and ray gun blasts. Sound is liberating, and probably against office rules. Up the rules! Download these tools for awesome audibles at www.pccomputing.com.

Get into the Ring

☆☆☆☆☆ This is the mother lode, the big enchilada, the primal source, the wellspring, the sine qua non of sound sites—except it isn't really a site. Instead, the Sound Ring is a loose confederation of more than a dozen Web sites that specialize in harboring fugitive sound files. Start at any page that's a member of the Sound Ring, and from there you can move lazily from one page to another until you've come full circle and your eardrums are ringing. The individual sites—the source of many of the Kahuna's other recommendations—are always changing. There's no orderly way to search for particular sounds, so think of it as an adventure for your ears, which aren't getting out as much as they used to.
Sound Ring

That Isn't at All Nice!

☆☆☆☆☆ The daily battle with my PC wouldn't be worth it without Daffy's *woo-woos* and Bugs Bunny's wisecracks. My computer's sounds teem with Warner Bros. cartoon characters, and on bad days they make life worth living. If you, too, have such a pitiful life that it only takes a line from Marvin the Martian to brighten your existence, set sail for the Looney Tunes SoundSource. There you'll discover the ultimate set of lines, sound effects, and music from the Looney Tunes. You can even download the complete soundtracks of 351 WB cartoons, but get a new hard drive first. They're 1.3GB. I won't have to leave the house for months.
Looney Tunes SoundSource

Something Completely Python

☆☆☆☆ Of course no PC is complete without a lovely array of Monty Python sounds. Not surprisingly, you'll find quite a few of them at the Monty Python Movie Sounds page, from the classic "Oh, that's not dead, it's resting," to the ever-popular "Please fondle my buttocks" and "Better bring a bucket." And don't forget the cheeky collection of Python music in MIDI and MPEG formats—you twit.
Monty Python Movie Sounds

WHY YOU HAVE A $3,000 WALKMAN

☆☆☆☆ I used to think using a PC to play music CDs was a waste of hardware. That is, until I found the CD DataBase at www.cddb.com.

A software CD player that's designed to tap into a music database, CD DataBase will not only play your music, but create a library of discs, song tracks, music collections, and other trivia. The CDDB site has links to dozens of players like DiskPlay 4 and Notify CD. Both read the CD's name and contact a database server to give you all the information you need. CD DataBase

Damn It, Jim!

☆☆☆☆☆ You don't have to be a Trekkie to want to beam down WAV and MIDI files from Holodeck 3. The site is brimming over with sounds from our favorite sci-fi tradition. There are plenty of captured computer sounds that make great event WAVs. But there are also classic lines

GET REAL

☆☆☆☆ There is another way to get music off the Web—one that doesn't involve grand larceny. Use RealAudio player, which you may already have if your PC plays music that doesn't sound like a calliope when you visit a site. Direct your browser to a page like Warner Bros. Records' www.wbr.com. There you'll find songs from Steve Earle, Natural Born Chillers, and others. You can't save the files to your hard drive to play locally. But would you rather fire up the browser to listen to Paula Cole's "Where Have All the Cowboys Gone?" or listen to the warden's instructions for a full body-cavity search? RealPlayer

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Giving It Away
Missed last month's Web Kahuna? Don't sweat it. Get everything on our Web site.

Make Windows Scream
Check out this month's cover story, then log on for more tips and tricks.

Help!
You need it, we've got it in our new Help section. Upgrade to Windows 98 the easy way, fix data-destroying bugs in Office 97, and snap up dozens of exclusive downloads.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID PERRY. ILLUSTRATIONS BY SCOTT MATTHEWS, REGAN HONDA, ELIZABETH BRANDT, AND MARC ROSENTHAL.

from all the *Star Trek* casts, including an irresistible William Shatner barking, "Scotty, beam me up."
Holodeck 3

Do It Daily

☆☆☆ Poor soul! You're so hooked on WAV files, you don't care if the sound is a burst, belch, blare, or bang. You just want new WAV files, and you want them now! Simmer down and slip in a bookmark for the Daily. Wav. It gives you a new fix every day with a different WAV. And if you want to overdose, check out the site's uncut archive.
Daily.Wav

Sounding Bored?

☆☆☆☆ You don't want to simply listen to sound files. You want to transform them—to diddle with recordings until Michael Jackson sounds like Johnny Cash, and Johnny Cash sounds like Donald Duck. Then snag Cool Edit and touch up (or mangle) sound files to make them louder, smaller, quieter, longer, echoier, or reverbier. Convert, sample, and record sound files like a pro. The full version is $50 shareware; the light edition is $25. And pay it—you'll have to, to get rid of its inventively irritating nag, which lets you choose only two of the program's dozen features each time you start it. Not cool, guys.
Cool Edit

EVENT HORIZON

☆☆☆☆☆ This is one-half of the best time-waster you'll find. The other half is the collections of event WAV sounds suggested this month by the Kahuna. Wave Events for Windows is the program that lets you use all those neat sounds you spend nights and nights downloading. It lets you assign different sounds to events in different programs. Opening WordPerfect brings a cheer; opening Microsoft Word is heralded with a sigh. But that's just my system. You get to create your own sound scheme. And you've got 30 days before you have to decide if such joy is worth a mere 10 bucks. Wave Events

Frankly, Scarlet, I, Uh . . .

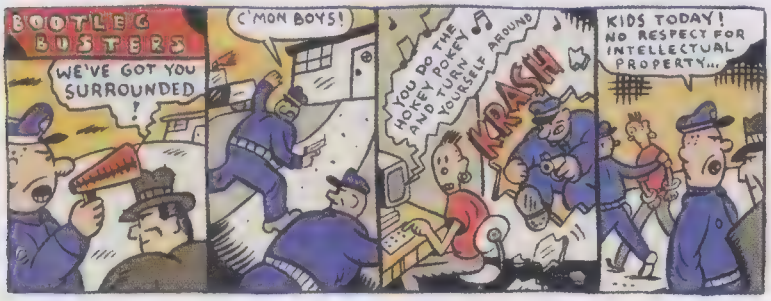
☆☆☆ The Movie Quote Quiz is not only where you can pick up some great WAVs from the movies. ("Oh, Stewardess. I speak Jive.") It's also a game—you try to guess what movies 75 quotes come from. There's no prize. It's enough that you've found a WAV of Hal saying, "I'm sorry Dave. I'm afraid I can't do that." Don't be greedy.
Movie Quote Quiz

Mysteries of Minnira

☆☆☆ Each month, Minnira changes the files you'll find at Minnira's Sound Page. They may include evil laughs, TV themes, cows, or scenes from *Pulp Fiction.* The site's a good way to procrastinate at least once a month. When you're my age, you'll wish you could procrastinate monthly.
Minnira's Sound Page

MUSIC TO STEAL BY

☆☆☆☆ Want just one song off an album, and you don't want to buy the entire album to get it? The solution is simple: Steal it. Now, what I'm about to discuss skirts outlaw territory, and PCC's attorneys and I don't suggest you actually do this. We're just talking hypotheticals, you understand? OK, then. MP3 is a compression audio format descended from MPEG-1 that creates CD-quality music files about one-tenth the size of a WAV file. Get started with Unreal Player, a simple program available as freeware and $20 shareware. Then go for it. Unreal Player



By Ron White

For live links to all these plus 1,001 more free downloads, head to www.pccomputing.com

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WIN 100 WINDOWS MAGAZINE 1998 · intel inside pentium

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****WINDOWS 98 RELEASE POLICY:** All systems shipped after the official Windows 98 launch will be pre-loaded with Windows 98. We are offering free upgrades (plus $9.95 S/H) to new Windows 98 with any system purchased within 30 days of its release.

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PCComputing — Pentium 200 MMX... "An office tool you'll respect." —PC Computing, *May '98*

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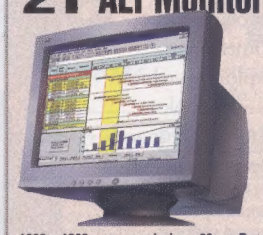

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Are you going to step up to Windows 98?

Is it hot in hell? Of *course* you plan to make the jump from Windows 95 to 98—well, two-thirds of you anyway. Not so surprising since without Windows 98 you can't take advantage of the newest technologies, like USB, AGP, and WaveTop (which broadcasts multimedia info to your PC via public television signals). For home and small business use, Win98's your best bet. All others, this way to NT 5.0.

If yes, then when?

Thirty-four percent of you are the types who camped overnight in front of CompUSA three summers ago to be the first in line for Windows 95—and there's nothing stopping you this time around. You'll upgrade immediately. Another third reflects a more corporate outlook: You'll get Windows 98 in 6 to 12 months. Because despite a faster setup, anything as major as a companywide operating system upgrade takes longer than expected. (See Murphy's Law of Business, Section 25, Line 4.)

Why are you upgrading?

Just because. You want new, you want shiny. You want the seat warmers and cup holders the carmaker forgot to build into your '95 family wagon. Forty-three percent of you admitted that hey, you just like having the latest and greatest. At least Windows 98 should outlast flashes in the pan like, say, those Tamagotchi things.

33%

Fuggedaboutit. A third of you thumb your noses at Windows 98. You want more—like a faster, crashproof OS and tighter security. Oh yeah, and it oughtta be free.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELIZABETH BRANDT AND MARC ROSENTHAL

If no, what would change your mind?

There is such a thing as a free operating system—but no one except that weird kid next door uses Linux. However, 38 percent of you said you'd happily upgrade if Microsoft gave Windows 98 away. Aside from just being cheap, you could be on to something. Microsoft Internet Explorer—which has always been free—overtook Netscape Navigator late last year and now owns almost 60 percent of the browser market.

By Leslie Ayers

Enter next month's I-Poll at www.pccomputing.com

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